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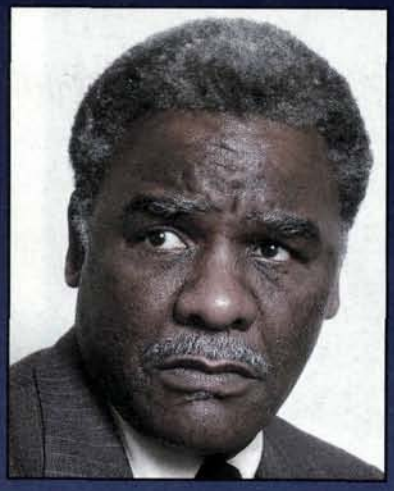
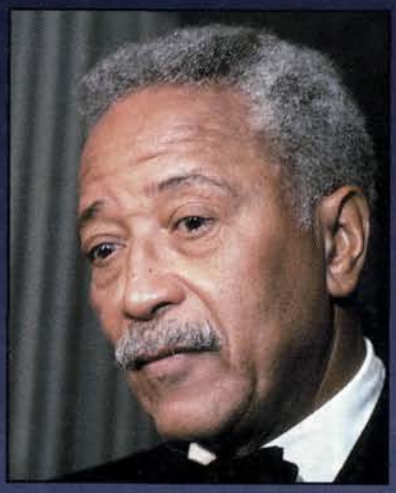
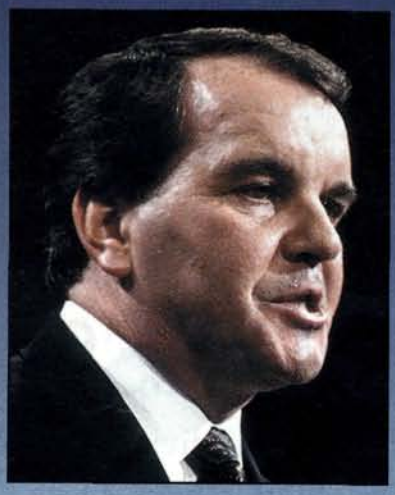
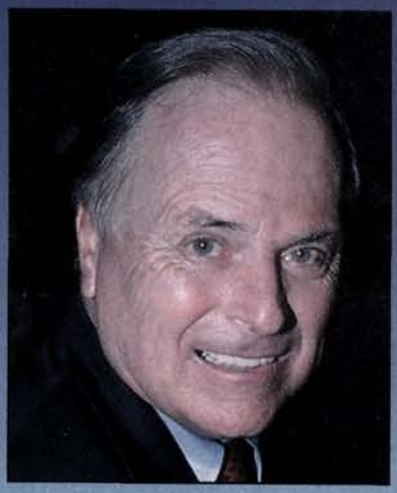
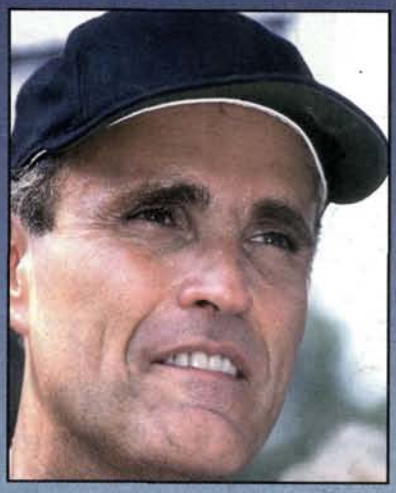
THE NEW REPUBLIC

The End of The Rainbow?



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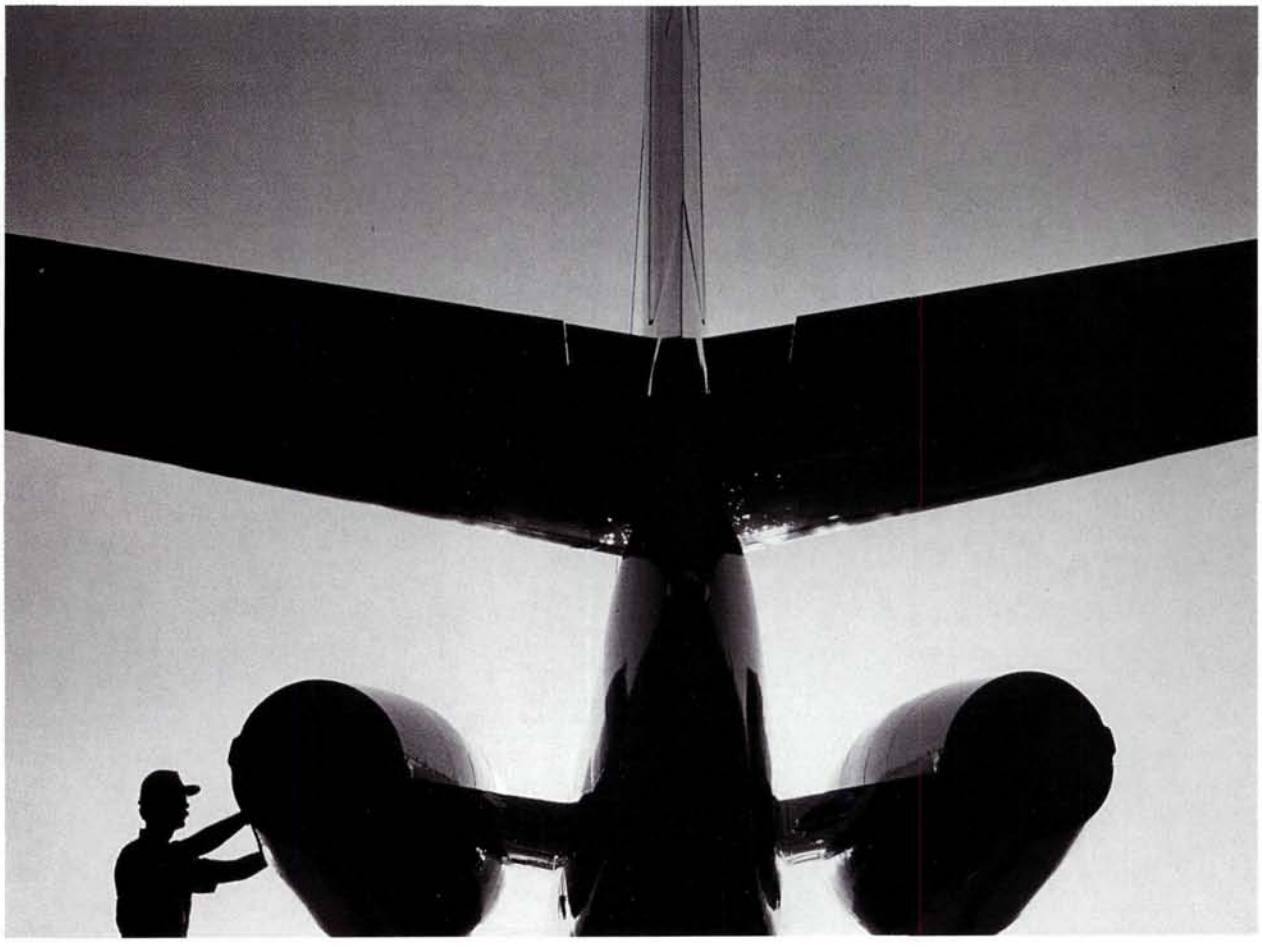

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Jeff Faux and Robert Wright: a NAFTA slugfest &c.

6 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** TRB: FREE-LUNCH FOREIGN POLICY A political syndrome spreads.

7 **THE EDITORS** CARDED When—and how—the race card should be played.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Waco revisited, gorilla-grams, a Hillary suck-up &c.

9 **JENNIFER ALLEN** STICKING TOGETHER A report from Tailhook, two years later.

10 **AMY WILENTZ** PANAMA CITY POSTCARD: SLIPPERY BLADES An actor and an election.

12 **JEFFREY ROSEN** COURT WATCH: REASONABLE WOMEN Ginsburg, Thomas, harassment.

13 **ALON PELED** MARTIAL RULE South Africa's military faces racial integration.

16 **L. J. DAVIS** THE NEW BOSS Richard Riordan was dismissed as a neophyte when he ran for mayor of Los Angeles. Since he won, however, his savvy and his real ambitions have been transforming the character of L.A. politics.

20 **JIM SLEEPER** THE END OF THE RAINBOW In cities across America, the old liberal-Democrat coalitions have been crumbling in the face of new demographics, new faces and a new liberalism. Is David Dinkins doomed?

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: TRANSFORMATIONS Victor Nunez's *Ruby in Paradise* thrives on simplicity; *M. Butterfly* doesn't.

28 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: HILLBILLY BLUES Robert Schenkkan's *The Kentucky Cycle* aspires to epic and descends to melodrama.

30 **ROBERT ALTER** IN RESPONSIBILITIES BEGIN DREAMS *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling* by Diana Trilling

36 **MICHAEL IGNATIEFF** BOUNDARIES OF PAIN *Liberal Nationalism* by Yael Tamir

39 **BRAD LEITHAUSER** THRILLS AND CHILLS *Smilla's Sense of Snow* by Peter Hoeg

40 **ANNIE DILLARD** POEM *Index of First Lines*

42 **ROBERT WRIGHT** WASHINGTON DIARIST: OBSESSION

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CORRESPONDENCE

Attempted assassination

To the editors:

When you decided to try to assassinate my reputation because of my criticism of NAFTA, you should have assigned the task to a writer who can shoot straight.

You wouldn't know it from Robert Wright's article ("Faux Pas," October 11), but my paper on NAFTA objects to the proposed agreement on the basis of severe imbalance between manufacturing productivity and wages in Mexico. It argues that the two-year-old U.S. trade surplus with Mexico is transitory for reasons that have to do with the composition of trade with Mexico and the overvalued peso. It concludes that the introduction of democratic institutions into Mexico's authoritarian political system should be a prerequisite for any further economic integration. I can imagine a serious critique of my views. Alas, Mr. Wright is not up to it.

Wright makes one effort to address my analysis of the effect of NAFTA on jobs through what he calls a "thought experiment." His effort to experiment with thought is commendable. Unfortunately, it does not succeed. Wright seems to think that if Mexico and the United States simultaneously increase their exports to each other the result would be a rise in total employment in both countries. He doesn't seem to get that one country's export is another country's import. In order to measure net job growth one has to subtract jobs displaced by imports from jobs created by exports. One should not need a Ph.D. in economics to comprehend the difference between *net* and *gross*. Neither does Wright understand that exports to Mexico can increase by virtue of shifting production to Mexico with no concurrent or subsequent impact on U.S. employment. Nor does he grasp that standard economic theory—which he modestly claims to know more about than I do—holds that trade does not affect total employment, but rather rearranges the composition of production in each nation in a more efficient way. These are the "efficiency gains" that NAFTA advocates Hufbauer and Schott estimate at less than $2 billion for the entire U.S. economy. Wright's failure to distinguish between the variety of claims for NAFTA is perhaps what leads him into the error of charging that I have inconsistently represented the views of NAFTA proponents.

Wright's snide remark concerning my "lack of total immersion in the basic principles of economics" is unearned. Like so many others in this debate, he mistakes the ideology of conventional economics for the principles of conventional economics. Using the latter, one cannot predict the effect of reducing trade barriers unless the economies involved are operating under certain specified conditions, which include full employment and an absence of cross-border capital investment. Because these conditions do not apply, judgments about NAFTA's outcome must be built upon an analysis of the particular political economies of both nations as well as the specifics of the agreement and side agreements. Wright is entitled to make a critique of my analysis—which he did not do. He is not entitled to claim that I must be wrong on the authority of economic principles. Economic principles make no such claim.

In an article padded with ad hominem sniping, Wright manages to squeeze out two other minor substantive points. One is a flat statement that my observation on trucking safety regulation is "wrong." Like so many others with strong opinions on the subject, Wright has not read NAFTA. The agreement says nothing about Mexican truck drivers complying with U.S. safety requirements. The omission is glaring because the section of NAFTA covering civilian aircraft is specific on the subject. Moreover, a memorandum of understanding between the two countries now declares a Mexican commercial trucker's license the equivalent of a U.S. license. This action is being challenged in court on the grounds that the Mexican license lacks U.S. requirements for training in air braking, transport of hazardous materials and several other functions. The ability to read English is not a requirement for a commercial driver's license in Mexico.

Wright's other point is that a reference to a study by Professor Ed Leamer was imprecisely stated. As the author has since clarified his meaning, I concede the point, although others, including last week's *New York Times*, have also misunderstood the original language. But the thrust of Leamer's analysis remains the same—that NAFTA will further lower the incomes of a majority of the U.S. labor force. Indeed, my reference was conservative in that it cited the low point in Leamer's range of the negative effect of free trade on incomes.

It's hard to get upset at an attempt to trash my work that does so little damage. But I do object strongly to Wright's contemptible cheap shot at the Economic Policy Institute. However much you may dislike my analysis of NAFTA, allowing him to disparage by implication the work of a large number of serious and respected scholars associated with the Institute—some of whom, by the way, support the trade agreement with Mexico—represents a level of intellectual thuggery to which I would not have expected THE NEW REPUBLIC to sink.

JEFF FAUX
President, Economic Policy Institute
Washington, D.C.

Robert Wright replies:

That NAFTA barely mentions highway regulations is precisely my point; it would not alter the status quo under which Mexican truck drivers (who—yikes!—already roam U.S. highways) are obliged to meet *every* state and federal regulation. You might not know it from Faux's letter, but the memorandum of understanding on driver's licenses has nothing to do with NAFTA; it's a DOT initiative that has been in effect for more than a year. And it doesn't insulate Mexican drivers from U.S. law. Thus, any truck driver who can't speak basic English can, under federal law, be denied entry to the United States or, once here, be taken off the road by any police officer.

As for my thought experiment: *Obviously* we subtract jobs displaced by imports from jobs created through exports (as well as adding and subtracting other things) to get net job gains. The point is that even then we may have a positive number on both sides of the border. Why? Largely because of the "efficiency gains" whose significance Faux continues to wrestle with. Faux says that, according to "standard economic theory," these gains won't assume the form of new jobs. He is referring to a particular model that assumes full employment both before and after a lowering of trade barriers. Naturally, if you buy these assumptions, then *any* talk of changes in total employment is absurd—including the claims of massive job loss that Faux vigorously propagates. Faux himself, when it suited his purposes, criticized these assumptions. But they do have the virtue of convenience; they help economists estimate the *magnitude* of the efficiency gains—not the form (e.g., new jobs) these gains will ultimately assume. By the way, the study that, as Faux notes, found a $2 billion efficiency gain for the United States also found a $12 billion gain for the Mexican economy—a gain that can then create jobs either in Mexico or (by financing imports) in the United States. I'm not surprised Faux failed to see the relevance of this number; he seems incapable of grasping how anything that's good for Mexico could be good for America.

I admire Faux's audacity in calling his severe distortion of Edward Leamer's findings an "imprecise" statement of them. As for Faux's revised statement of Leamer's main "thrust": I read this part of his letter to Leamer. He said his paper neither states this nor logically implies it.

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Not so holy

To the editors:

In his article about Mother Dolores in the October 4 issue (Bethlehem Postcard, "Mother Dolores"), Simon Sebag Montefiore wrote that her "taking holy orders in 1962 is usually described by supermarket tabloids as 'a mystery.'" Since the "holy orders" of bishop, priest and deacon in the Roman Catholic Church are all restricted to men, it would indeed not only be a "mystery" if she had received "holy orders" in 1962, but it also would have been rather revolutionary and quite a news item. Perhaps Montefiore meant to refer to her religious profession of vows, which is substantially different from holy orders.

REV. THOMAS J. PAPROCKI
Chicago, Illinois

Purely opportunistic

To the editors:

In his October 4 TRB, "Trading Places," Michael Kinsley castigates the Republicans who may desert the NAFTA cause as "purely opportunistic" because "complaints about the Clinton-negotiated 'side agreements' are merely cover for the abandonment of principle. Whatever the validity of these complaints—and they are almost entirely bogus—who honestly believes that they are what motivates the opposition?"

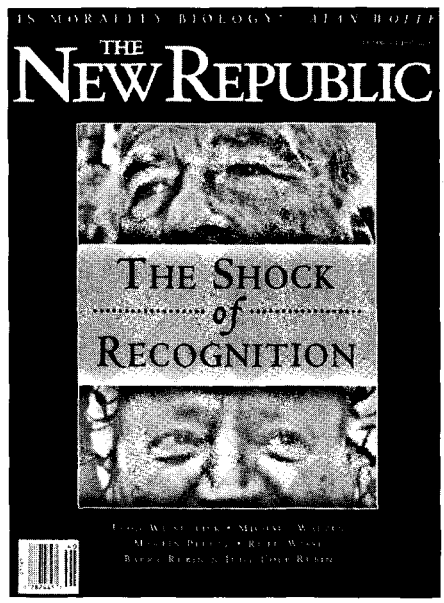
Almost entirely bogus? Really! As it happens, many thoughtful economists, wedded to free trade, have become disillusioned with NAFTA precisely because of the broader systemic implications of the supplemental agreements on the environment and labor. They endorse NAFTA nonetheless, for fear of being found in the company of the new Rainbow Coalition: environmentalist greens, unions representing blue-collar workers and Perotists who see red.

The central truth is that gains from free trade are compatible with diversity of environment and labor standards across countries. The "supplemental agreements," presented as necessary *preconditions* for any trade liberalization, as the president did at his eloquent press conference performance on NAFTA last week, represent a muddying of principle or, as Kinsley would put it, an opportunistic abandonment of it.

In fact, the insistence on such preconditions (including the raising of the minimum wage in Mexico) in liberalizing trade with the poor countries, which the present administration embraces as a historic new achievement, is little more than a surrender to the very same fears Perot and Choate articulate, which the administration claims not to share.

What Clinton needs to do, if this dangerous nonsense is not to get embedded in our policy and bedevil all future trade liberalizations, is to state without ambiguity that trade liberalization with poor countries with abundant cheap labor and different, even lower, environmental and labor standards is gainful.

However, the president should also add that if we enter into a special, preferential, discriminatory Free Trade Area with, and for, another country, we will insist on requiring (and even assisting) it to adopt a minimum set of standards: on democratic politics, on environmental cleanups, on labor safety, etc. In short, we would not lie in a special bed with Mexico, or any other country, offering them special trading rights not extended



to all others, unless this is done.

"Supplemental agreements" then follow, *not* because we think erroneously that without them we cannot have "fair trade" and hence gainful free trade, but because we insist correctly on good citizenship, if you like, before we enter into a special embrace.

This clarity of principle is surely missing from the administration's policy today. The reason is clear. The administration came to power by making much of the decline of real wages of the unskilled in the 1980s. Moreover, its policy economists, Larry Summers and Larry Katz, are among those whose research has concluded (incorrectly in my view) that trade has significantly contributed to this phenomenon, even though neither infers protection as a remedy. It is not surprising then that this administration takes enthusiastically to free trade only with Perotist preconditions aimed at raising the cost of industry elsewhere.

The difference is that Perot and Choate go overboard, turning anxiety into fevered imagination. When will President Clinton abandon these fears, and also the other fears that drive his unwise Japan trade policy, and truly come on board with us free traders? It is time to indulge his own good sense and optimism rather than his aides' bad judgment and pessimism.

JAGDISH BHAGWATI
American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research
Washington, D.C.

Blythe accolades

To the editors:

Accolades to Jacob Weisberg for finding the unpublished "Blythe Spirit" (September 6). Do you have a date assigned to "Blythe Spirit"? In it *Phlegm* Snopes has not yet become *Flem*, so Faulkner must have written this piece before *Father Abraham*, which according to its introduction was thought to have been written late in 1926, and was thought to be the earliest surviving attempt at the Snopes novel when *Father Abraham* was printed in 1983. Would your authority who authenticated the manuscript disagree? William Jefferson Blythe Snopes is echoed by a bigamous character, Wesley Snopes, a cousin in *The Mansion*, who married Eula, foreshadowed by Lula Mae, the bursting ripe 13-year-old when Flem came to clerk in her father's store; Faulkner used the word "mammalian" to describe both girls. I agree with Professor Thomas L. McHaney, writing about *Elmer* in the *Mississippi Quarterly* 26, Summer 1973, when he says "there is startling evidence in Faulkner's early work that most of his characters and thematic preoccupations existed in his mind almost from the beginning of his writing career." Your September 6 printing further validates this premise. Whatever the date of "Blythe Spirit," Faulkner's words are there: bovine body, unshod venus (later the barefoot Lena Grove and Dewey Dell Bundren), the innocent concupiscence, shibboleth, redolence of wisteria, fedundation, primordial, jetsam and flotsam and tumescent. Of coincidental interest is Faulkner's mention, this early in his writing, of Hope, Arkansas, nudging to mind our 1993 Hope nexus.

Just when we think everything by Faulkner is printed, something else surfaces and "This Earth Finds Him Breath." I hope you find more in your files or will reprint the Robert Penn Warren essay or some of your Faulkner poems. The September 6 piece is a source rife with questions (one-third brother?) and excitement. Faulkner is inexhaustible.

JANE ISBELL HAYNES
Memphis, Tennessee

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FROM WASHINGTON

Free-lunch foreign policy

Bill Clinton is the victim of a devilish bait-and-switch on the subject of using American military force. As a Democratic candidate for president, he was told he had to prove his freedom from the taint of McGovernism and his belief in a strong foreign policy. Nasty subtext: as a man who avoided military service during Vietnam, he had to prove his courage by showing a willingness to fight. So he did it. And now the trap is sprung: he stands accused, by many of the same people, of recklessly endangering American blood and treasure in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti. Subtext: he saved his own hide, and he doesn't care about others'.

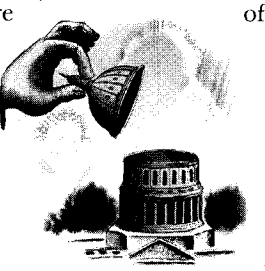
It serves Clinton right, in a way, for not knowing his own mind. But the politics of American policy in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti reflect a citizenry that also does not know its own mind, and other politicians who enjoy the luxury of not being president and are happy to have it both ways on questions of war and peace.

The born-again doves say that Clinton's interventions are different from Reagan's or Bush's. They are merely humanitarian, not rooted in America's national interest. But the going definition of America's national interest used to be broader, and supporters of previous military exercises could be quite savage about lily-livered, weak-kneed appeasers who couldn't see America's vital interests at stake in Grenada or Lebanon or Nicaragua or El Salvador or Panama or Kuwait. While these former hawks did not sneer, back then, at "merely" humanitarian concerns—indeed, they played the humanitarian card for all it was worth (babies ripped from incubators, and so on)—they also lectured sternly about the crucial importance of American constancy, credibility and so on.

(The irony works both ways, of course. Vietnam-era doves now go on, Nixon-style, about "credibility" and "peace with honor.")

These former hawks used to warn against congressional encroachment on the president's authority as commander in chief. Now they warn against presidential usurpation of Congress's constitutional war powers. They used to bemoan the way media images of war's brutality (in, say, Vietnam) could turn a sentimental public against any use of force. Now they bemoan the way media images of human suffering (in, say, Bosnia or Somalia) can entice a sentimental public into unwise support for the use of force.

They used to complain about "multilateralism" as an unnecessary restraint on the forceful assertion of American power. Now they complain about "multilateralism" drawing the United States into needless conflicts, and they transform the unlikely figure of U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali into a bloodthirsty monster sucking America into war. They then cover their retreat by saying that this matter or that one should be left to "the United Nations"—as if U.N. troops come from Mars, or as if other countries should be willing to risk blood and treasure when the United States won't.



If America is of a mind to retreat from the world, leave other countries to their fate and abandon any pretense of leadership, that is a respectable—even appealing—option. But few opponents of involvement in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti have the guts to put it that clearly. Instead they say they favor "preventing starvation" but not "nation-building," or that some particular problem is better handled by others or that the policy is too ill-defined.

Legitimate criticisms can be made of the Clinton policy in Somalia—though many criticisms that are made smack of hindsight. But those who say they favored the American involvement there until its purpose changed are copping out. The purpose was always and remains preventing starvation. That is a more ambitious task than Presidents Bush and Clinton anticipated. The change has not been in the purpose of the intervention but in the apparent burden of achieving it. If you aren't prepared for at least a bit of "nation-building," you're not really for "preventing starvation." It's fair to say, "Sorry, we now realize that burden is too great." It's not fair to say, "We accomplished our mission," or, "Don't worry—the United States is leaving but the U.N. will finish the job without us."

What all this suggests to me is the final triumph in foreign affairs of the free-lunch politics that have long infected domestic policy. We want all our government benefits; we just don't want to pay for them. We want to strut as the world's superpower, so long as there is no risk or cost attached.

The history of the foreign policy free lunch actually goes back as far as the domestic version. It began with Ronald Reagan's defense buildup, paid for with borrowed dollars. America stood tall—on a pile of government debts. The so-called Reagan Doctrine—which called for the use of surrogate armies to fight guerrilla wars on our behalf—was conceived as a way for America to pursue an aggressive foreign policy while risking only foreign blood.

Then there was the Grenada Illusion. Americans had never even heard of Grenada when we awoke to learn of our magnificent victory there, purging the humiliation of Vietnam. The illusion was that real wars can be fought in hindsight and that important military victories can be virtually cost-free. A related "standing tall" myth—that America never makes deals with terrorists or hostage-takers—suffered a blow in Iran-contra, but didn't really crumble as logic might dictate.

The Gulf war might have been an exception. Although the money for that enterprise came from foreigners, President Bush did put thousands of American lives on the line for what he said was our national interest. And he got a vast majority of Americans to approve ahead of time. Whether that approval would have survived substantial American casualties was never, fortunately, put to the test.

As a result, though, the Gulf war actually enhanced the free-lunch syndrome. It encouraged both tendencies deplored by the opposing sides in the current intervention debate: on the one hand, an overeagerness to get involved in distant nations' affairs (because the Liberator of Kuwait can do anything); on the other hand, a tendency to panic and want out at the first hint of casualties (because the United States should be immune to this sort of thing).

The position of those who hold that, with the end of the cold war, America can retreat from its world responsibilities is arguable and tempting. So is the position that we are a great, bold and compassionate country that should continue to lead the world. What is demeaning and harmful is the widespread belief that we can have it both ways.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 1, 1993

CARDED

The discussion of race in New York has become a miserable microcosm of the American discussion more generally. It swings between demagoguery and inhibition; and the latter is usually a consequence of the former.

The big surprise, in New York, is that the demagogues have been abetted by the president of the United States. "Too many of us are still unwilling to vote for people who are different than we are," he famously said a few weeks ago. There is some truth to this, obviously. Color-blindness is not yet an American trait. There are many whites who vote only for whites. Still, in the last mayoral election in New York a black candidate was elected with fully a quarter of the white vote. And racial voting isn't by any means confined to whites. There are many blacks who will vote only for blacks; David Dinkins enjoyed 95 percent of the black vote the last time around. And this week the polls show him leading Rudolph Giuliani, thereby robbing Bill Clinton of some of the empirical basis for his rashness.

Clinton's comments kicked off a little carnival of racial and ethnic canards. "Elements that can best be described as fascist seem to have grown up around Mr. Giuliani," said a pastor in Bedford-Stuyvesant; and another clergyman for Dinkins mentioned Mussolini. Jose Torres, the former boxer and now one of Dinkins's campaign managers, observed in *El Diario-La Prensa* that "people with racist tendencies sympathize with Giuliani." Bill Lynch, the deputy mayor of the city, said that Giuliani reminds him of David Duke. A Dinkins supporter who heads an association of black cops demanded to know how it is that Herman Badillo, who is running for comptroller on the Giuliani ticket, can care about Hispanics and be married to a Jew. Orthodox Jewish opponents of Alan Hevesi, who is running for comptroller on the Dinkins ticket, are muttering about his Catholic wife. Representative Charles Rangel warned *The Forward* of the consequences of a Giuliani victory: "If the Chasidim [sic] community is constantly reacting in a way that can cause people to believe that they were screaming too loudly [against Dinkins], that *they were making it a Jewish thing, it could be personalized* and politicized and it could have a backlash."

This is, all of it, repulsive. It is precisely what American politics does not need. Naturally all of the candidates have let it be known that they are embarrassed by this style of support. And naturally none of them has told these supporters, loudly and publicly, to stifle it.

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of the discussion, there is a civility so exquisite and a spirit of comity so pure that the excruciations of race go simply unmentioned. Thus, in its treatment of "race relations" under Dinkins in an advertisement by the New York Citizens for David Dinkins, co-chaired by Felix Rohatyn, Brooke Astor, Oscar de la Renta, Cyrus Vance, et al., these pillars of the community declare that "We elected David Dinkins to be a healer. He has not let us down. Quietly and steadily—without hype or fanfare—we are on our way to becoming a city that reasons together and works together." What on earth are these people talking about? Has the news from Crown Heights not yet reached Mortimer's? Race relations in New York during the Dinkins years have become a nightmare. It is not all Dinkins's fault; but it is not none of his fault, either. And in the same ad the pillars say of Giuliani that "he has played no role in the city's civic life," which sounds to us rather like an innuendo about class. No doubt it is true that Giuliani has not appeared at any galas at the 42nd Street library. But surely "the civic life" of New York is vast. So even the swells appear to be, how shall we say, unwilling to vote for people who are different than they are.

Compared with such refined denials of the social crisis, we will take Clinton's bumbling candor any day. The president was right to feel it necessary to make a frank comment about race. His frankness was merely amateurish and incomplete. He put his finger on the problem and then slighted its magnitude. But speaking honestly about the rift between the races is not the same thing as "playing the race card." Or, if it is the same thing, then let the card be played, but the whole card, the whole truth. The city *is* riven ethnically and racially; it *has* become a world of euphemisms and insults; the really urgent matters such as crime and welfare reform *cannot* be discussed calmly, and beyond the shadow of smears. So let the discussion not be calm, but let it also not be false. •

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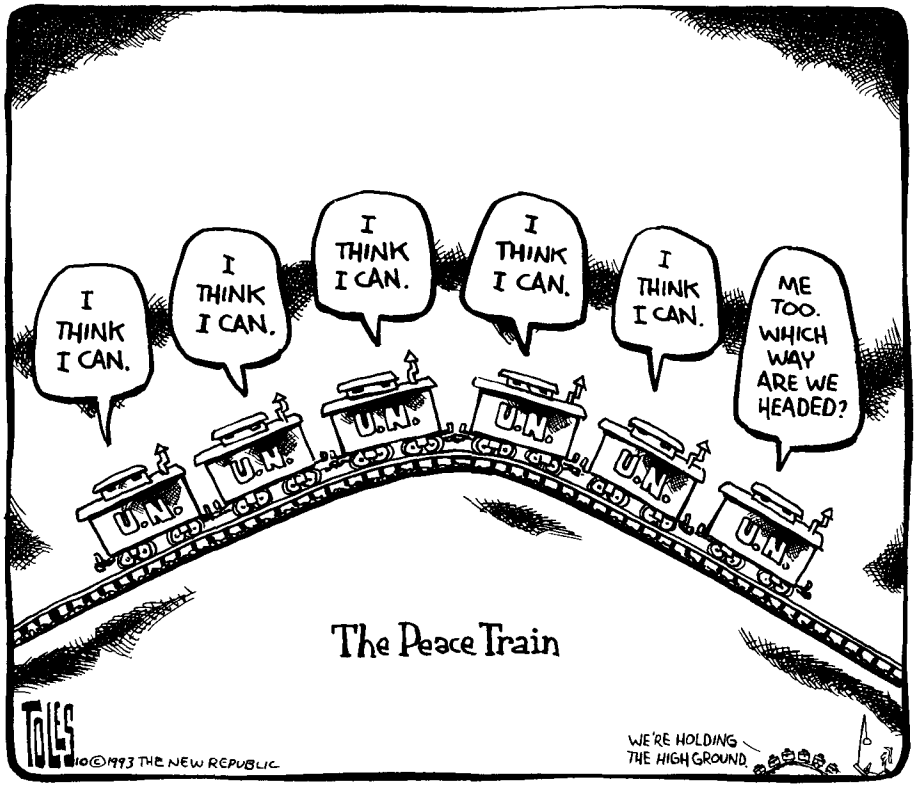
NOTEBOOK

WACO REVISITED: The Treasury's report detailing the ATF's missteps—and subsequent lies—in launching the first, botched raid on David Koresh's compound in Waco, Texas, rightly held key ATF officials responsible. Unfortunately, the Justice Department's report issued last week on the FBI's final decision to end the siege is not so brave. The material itself amounts to a damning portrayal of the judgment of the bureau and of Attorney General Janet Reno. Negotiators attempting to win the trust of Koresh clearly fought a war with other agents who opted to harass the Davidians with loud music and spotlights. On March 8, Bureau agents warned that "a mass suicide ordered by Koresh cannot be discounted." Later that month, they learned that Koresh had planned to blow up himself and his followers but aborted the plan at the last minute because he received a message from God "to wait." More interesting, the reasons given for the abrupt assault on the compound—continuing child abuse and fatigue among those policing the siege—both turned out to be canards. President Clinton's initial response to Reno's decision to launch the raid—"Why are we taking this action now, after seven weeks?"—turns out to be the correct one. It's a question the attorney general still hasn't satisfactorily answered.


I THINK I CAN.
I THINK I CAN.
I THINK I CAN.
I THINK I CAN.
I THINK I CAN.
ME TOO. WHICH WAY ARE WE HEADED?
U.N.
The Peace Train
TOLES ©1993 THE NEW REPUBLIC
WE'RE HOLDING THE HIGH GROUND

DEEP THOUGHTS: To be sure, we believe every American has the right to make insensitive, even racist, remarks to his elected representatives; and that Dan Koenigsberg, the Teaneck man recently charged with violating New Jersey's anti-bias statute for sending a gorilla-gram to his township's only black councilman, though offensive and morally reprehensible, was well within his constitutional rights. But his statement in his defense deserves a footnote in the compendium of the most disingenuous comments of all time: "While I was within my First Amendment rights to hire the gorilla messenger, on reflection, I realize that the use of a gorilla carried with it a message that was insensitive, insulting and reprehensible. To Mel Henderson and his family, I offer my profound and sincere apologies. My intention was not to bring race into the political debate, although I obviously failed."

HILLARY CLINTON SUCK-UP WATCH: "All this year she has been in charge of developing the administration's plan, although even a few weeks ago it was not clear how big a role she would take in selling it. Her appearances before dazzled congressional committees answered that question. But that was only the most visible of her efforts. Students, and their elders, stayed as long as she would Friday night waiting to shake her hand or offer praise after she used a Brown University stage for a television program on health care. Earlier, a crowd waited in suburban Warwick, R.I., to catch a glimpse of her limousine as she left a nursing home..."
—Adam Clymer, *The New York Times*, October 11

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL:

Agence France-Presse

President Clinton and Colin Powell, risking irreparable damage to the unit cohesion of the U.S. military. •

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Tailhook, two years later.

STICKING TOGETHER

By Jennifer Allen

Welcome to the Tailhook '93 Symposium, where the chairman of the board, retired Navy Captain W. D. "Bill" Knutson, has written up a few guidelines for those attending. First off, let me explain, as it was explained to me several times before I could even begin to understand it, that an OK-3 is a perfect arrested landing; it means catching (tailhooking) the third wire on an aircraft carrier. For aviators, it's the symbol of perfection. And it's how Captain Bill asked attendees to perform at this year's symposium, here at the Town and Country hotel in the heart of Mission Valley, i.e., Hotel Circle, next door to the Fashion Valley Mall, just off the intersection of the I-8 freeway east to Yuma and the I-5 freeway north to Los Angeles.

"SPECIAL ALERT—NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE." This was written in the registration package for Tailhookers, which came complete with 00-hundred time slots for each event. "Keep everything you say 'on the record,'" the memo suggested. "Avoid saying anything 'off the record' or 'on background.' It just confuses the issue." Not confusing the issue were the badges we in the media had to wear. These badges were green; they flashed green for STOP! Look who you're smiling at! Don't shake that person's hand! Take your hand back! And one captain did exactly that to me as I was standing in what seemed to be a receiving line at the opening night's reception.

"Nothing other than my marriage literally brings more emotion," said Dave "the Wizard" White, than "Riding the Meatball" or "Riding the Ball" to catch that "perfect OK-3 wire." It is such a tense experience, the Wizard confided, that "if you broke some wind, a dog couldn't even hear it—you're that tight." Behind the Wizard was a photo of a carrier and the words, "Keep it Coming!" Wizard's Sky Hawk Reproductions, a company that makes plaques commemorating your first tailhook, was one of several booths here. There was also Armed Forces Insurance, offering complimentary camouflage pens. There was Flight Suits Limited, selling aviator jackets and "I Survived Tailhook '91 Witch Hunt" patches. There was Red River Valley Fighter Pilot's Association, whose River Rat Memorial reminds: "We Who Came Home Must Never Forget Those Who Could Not."

Meanwhile, protesters marched outside carrying signs: "Straight Men Destroy Morale and Good Order and Military Discipline"; "Tailhook Assaults—What Straight Soldiers Do"; "Women's Action Coalition! Patriarchal Demolition!" Cops on bikes, cops in cars and even some cops waiting in an enormous booking van hovered nearby. Watching the protesters were several news reporters, news cameras, a van with a satellite dish and Peter and Matt. Peter (20) and Matt (18) had on baseball caps, home-boy shirts, baggy shorts. Peter chewed gum. Matt sucked a sucker. Matt asked, "What's Tailhook, a bunch of gays?" I explained that Tailhook is a Naval aviator convention, and that two years back, in Las Vegas, women were sexually harassed. "So, all these people were harassed?" Peter wanted to know. The brothers were here for a seminar to prepare them to be correctional officers.

"We walked in there and the whole lobby smelled like alcohol, and just a bunch of old guys," Peter confirmed. We watched the cardboard signs bob for a while before heading up to the top floor of the hotel. Up here, drinking champagne in the outdoor balconied hallway, were several pageant-sashed, evening-gowned contestants from the Mrs. America pageant, which was also taking place at the Town and Country. The perfume was deafening.

"The fact that an organization had an unfortunate set of circumstances two years ago has no relation to fifty-one remarkable women coming together to applaud marriage and a prestigious title," said David Marmel, the contest's president. Mrs. New Jersey and Mrs. Mississippi applauded the president's fortitude. The president continued: "This is fantasy island." What he meant, I think, is what Mrs. Pennsylvania put another way, "It's a free vacation." This was a vacation away from home, during which Mrs. Florida and Mrs. Pennsylvania tried to go for a walk but couldn't because security guards would not let them off the elevator. "It would be nice to take a breath of fresh air by the pool," said Mrs. Florida, who earlier expressed fear over the Tailhooker proximity. Ratio of women to bodyguards, Mrs. Florida said, is 3:1.

"World Intelligence Brief," "Industrial Perspective" and "Naval Aviation Issues" were the talks at the symposium the following day, 0900 to 1600. These involved, more specifically: the naval aviator goal—locating, identifying and killing ground targets, survivability, close air support, night missions, thirst, hunger, leadership, the Pacific pond, 20 million graves, will, courage, hardware, the cold war, the Korean War, law and order, taxpayers, warriors, cruise missiles, automated carrier landings, the stealth bomber, Desert Storm, Vietnam, the A-12, the 46th parallel, the Right Stuff, gravity and air supply.

There was little air supply in the room. Chairs were locked together. About a third of the men were World War II veterans; that is, there were quite a few tilted heads when someone spoke without a microphone in the open forum. During the discussion concerning changing the name of Tailhook, one participant asked:

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"How many of you have named your grandchildren Iran-contra?" Tailhook, many noted, had taken on some bad connotations.

Over at the Tailhook Author's Corner sat Captain Wynn Foster, selling his book, *Captain Hook*. During his 163rd mission in Vietnam, anti-aircraft artillery hit his A-4 Sky Hawk, an incident that severed his arm at the elbow and, as the book jacket explained, left his "still-gloved hand lying on the starboard console." The captain continued flying over the Gulf of Tonkin where he ejected. Waiting for an autographed copy was retired Navy Captain Irene Wirtschafter, a woman who served in World War II, a woman who when I said to her, "So you were a captain?" informed me, "I *am* a captain. Once a captain, always a captain—right, captain?" she asked Captain Hook. Captain Irene said she was in Vegas in '91, and that she came away from it exhilarated. Sure, she was on the third floor. And sure, she said, "there was a lot of hijinks going on, but they were funny."

Loren and Bill and Wes were my fifty something companions at the final banquet on Saturday. Loren was drinking non-alcoholic beer, Bill wanted to set me up with his son and Wes was drawing for me the EKG pattern of an aviator during those last two miles of circling before you come on in, down the center, for a trapping. The landing strip is 260 feet long, Wes explained, it's moving, it's pitching. The EKG is a solid black line: 8.0 Richter. Maximum.

During the Pledge of Allegiance, we held our hands over our hearts; for the national anthem, we sang along silently with the woman singing into the flimsy P.A. system. After a moment of silence for those in Somalia, we bowed our heads while Captain Bill said a prayer for the "poor lost souls still holding in the Bolter pattern"—that is, those who missed the wire and are still traveling down the flight deck at 150 knots. This set off a few laughs and a unanimous "Amen." We all then ate and talked about football, and later, Captain "Wally" Schirra told us some jokes about his days in space with some "dumb-ass Marine named Glenn and three Air Force guys I don't remember." Then he directed matters to the greater storm ahead: Tailhook's future. "We have to stick together," the captain commanded, "stick our necks out and take the high road!"

Standing ovation. Everyone headed out. As I walked up the stairs to the ladies' room, a Tailhooker offered to race me. He was a few stairs behind, and I assured him I would beat him, and he assured me he had to go "toy-toy," and I knew it was time to leave. It was late, especially for an 0800 wake-up call to hit the freeway and head up to L.A., Raiders vs. Jets. I brought along a friend who had never been to a game. I explained the strategy: You cannot care about the opponent. The opponent is only there to be devastated, demolished, destroyed. The opponent has no family, no heart, no friends. "Demoralize him!" we yelled. And we did. Raiders 24. Jets 20.

JENNIFER ALLEN is a freelance writer.

PANAMA CITY POSTCARD

SLIPPERY BLADES

By Amy Wilentz

In the colonial zone of Panama City there stands a restored church originally built by Dominican friars at the end of the seventeenth century. Among the bits and pieces that remain from the original construction is the *arco chato*, or flat arch, that served as the base of the church choir. In the late 1800s, when worldwide debate over where to locate a transoceanic canal was raging among politicians, engineers and capitalists, the arch was used as evidence that Panama should be the site. Its intact condition was considered proof that Panama—unlike volcano-strewn Nicaragua—was geologically stable.

Politically, however, Panama has proved far less sturdy than the *arco chato*. Amid coups, drug lords running the economy, aborted elections and invasions, the country has had its earthshaking ups and downs. Now comes Panama's first post-invasion election, to be held in May, and while there is little chance it will be as bloody as the balloting of 1989, in which the current president, Guillermo Endara, was chosen, there is much apprehension: Panamanians are nervous about their future.

The fear this time is not about the United States invading, but about it leaving. Mostly, Panamanians are worried about what will happen at noon on December 31, 1999, when the huge American holdings in the country revert completely to Panamanian control, including the military bases and, of course, the Panama Canal. Panamanians have good reason to be scared: the United States pumps between $250 million and $300 million a year into their economy. Recent polls show that despite much rote grumbling among politicians about Panamanian sovereignty, 70 percent of Panamanians would like Americans to stay in some capacity. (Of course, the United States has already made one thing certain: General Manuel Antonio Noriega won't be in charge of reversion, which could be a field day for corruption, influence-peddling and fraud.)

Among those who are running for president in 1994, there have been few surprises. The candidates will almost all be white men from the elite, an honored tradition in Panamanian politics. For the Partido Revolucionario Democratico, the party of the late leftist military dictator Omar Torrijos and his sometime protégé, Noriega, the candidate will be the tall, light-eyed Ernesto Pérez-Balladares. A popular man, he cannot be discounted. David Guerra, a former pastor and engineer will run for Misión, the evangelical party. For the

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Christian Democrats, it will most likely be Ricardo Arias Calderon, who is highly intelligent but dry and driven. (He's known locally as *la monja loca*, or "the crazy nun.") Another candidate may be Billy Ford, an actual Panamanian in spite of the name and the fact that he looks like a Texan banker. Ford and Arias Calderon were vice presidents under Endara, but both have left the government. For Endara's Arnulfistas (named after Arnulfo Arias, the late president who was overthrown as often as he was elected), the candidate will probably be his remarried widow, Mireya de Gruber.

Were it not for Rubén Blades, the internationally renowned singer, composer and film actor, the election would be a dramatic bust. Blades is the kind of man charms Panamanian cops out of giving him traffic tickets. He has powerful friends as well as friends in the barrios. His father was in Torrijos's police force. He's a millionaire from a lower-middle-class background. He's a graduate of Harvard Law School. He's an artist. He is not easy to categorize, and that makes the Panamanian political elite nervous. As Arias Calderon once said, "I prefer Mozart."

Blades's decision to run wasn't an afterthought. Almost two years ago, he helped form a political party called Papá Egoró ("Mother Earth" in one of Panama's indigenous languages). It's not a green party, exactly, nor is it a leftist party. As he describes it, it's sort of a centrist organization with liberal tendencies, a heady pinch of Panamanian nationalism (whatever *that* means) and a sincere though perhaps naive desire to end corruption and to inspire participatory democracy.

To their horror, Blades is much smarter and more determined than the old pols expected. He's also quite savvy for someone so new to the political scene. This probably shouldn't come as a shock. In New York, where he lived for more than ten years, his friends—and his former friends—say he was always an operator. It's just that back then his eye was on the music industry. Now he wants to be president of a country. Things change.

Since entering the political fray, Blades has been accused of everything. Depending on whom you're talking to, he is a CIA agent, a Noriega sympathizer or a Communist. But what he really is is the consistent front-runner. In the latest poll published by *La Prensa*, a respected Panamanian daily, 20.7 percent of respondents thought that Blades would be Panama's next president. His closest competitor was Mireya (as Arnulfo's widow is called), with 19.4 percent. Everyone else trailed behind them in the single digits.

Blades has not yet been named his party's official candidate, and he is slippery when questioned on the subject. "I have to wait until we have a platform," he says, "and then the members must decide." Of course, if the members want to win, they'll select Blades, and since he is an important member of the party's directorate, he should also have considerable say about what goes into the platform. In other words, no matter what excuse he may give, it will be Blades who decides whether or not he's going to be a candidate.

One reason people in Panama suspect Blades may not run is that, in spite of the fact that he's been involved with Papá Egoró for almost two years, he has never moved back to Panama. He says that he sees no reason to move back before the campaign officially opens three months before the election. Many politicians in Panama believe this is Blades's big weakness as a candidate, but among Panamanians, politicians who have lived in Panama for the last fifty years are not so popular. The more they know 'em, the more they hate 'em. "Look who lives *here*," says Blades, capitalizing on this disgust. "*Por favor.*" In fact, for months the only candidate who has consistently outstripped Blades in the polls was *ninguno*: no one.

Many Panamanians believe Blades is worried about his professional status back in Los Angeles, where he lives. He often talks about possible film deals while strategizing over the Panamanian political calendar. Sometimes he has near conflicts, and it's unclear that Panama always wins out. Says one close adviser: "Imagine saying to a director in L.A., well, I'd like to be there for that day's shoot, but uh, unfortunately, I'm running for president of Panama ... and I have to meet with my neighborhood coordinators." Panamanian politicians remain hopeful that Blades will pull out and leave the Papá Egoró organization to some unknown novice. Still, president of Panama is not a bad thing to have on your résumé. And it's only a five-year gig. Panamanian law forbids consecutive terms.

Near Culebra Cut, a high mountain through which the most murderous part of the Panama Canal was dug, is Empire Range, a vast terrain where American soldiers have been conducting exercises since the First World War. Under a seemingly endless stretch of green lie tons of unexploded ordnance hidden or buried in the new growth. Thousands and thousands of American soldiers were trained here in this no-man's-land now punctuated by warning signs: *Peligro muerte!*, danger of death. "Explosives kill anybody," the signs continue, in English. *Campesinos* migrating to Panama City from the countryside have begun planting their fields on the range, and no one can say how long it will be before their families begin setting up squatters' housing among its greenery. In past years, several Panamanian children have been injured playing with duds.

Empire Range is like reversion—Panama's thorny rose. In pre-election Panama, nothing is quite as good as it seems, and anything could blow up in your face. Blades has it right when he says that it's time for real Panamanians to take over the country, but wrong if he expects it to happen soon, even if he is elected. For Panama is above all a place where big deals go down with an easy nod: Endara, for example, has been tainted by his former law firm's association with money laundering and drug trafficking, but he's still president, and not under any threat of impeachment. To undo all this with next year's election alone is impossible. As Blades would say, scornfully, *por favor.*

AMY WILENTZ is author of *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier* (Simon and Schuster).

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COURT WATCH

REASONABLE WOMEN

By Jeffrey Rosen

The lingering questions of the Thomas and Ginsburg hearings anxiously converged in a sexual harassment case before the Court this week. Can sexual banter in the workplace be punished if it offends women without affecting their job performance? And are men's and women's perspectives about sex so vastly different that women need special protection from the vulgarity of men? By answering no to both questions, the justices will have the chance to repudiate the most serious threat to the First Amendment of the past decade: the notion that words that create an "intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment," without inflicting more tangible harms, can be punished as harassment.

Invented in the 1970s by the feminist legal theorist Catharine MacKinnon, and endorsed in 1980 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the "hostile environment test" represents a radical exception to the First Amendment axiom that speech cannot be punished merely because it is offensive (see "Talking Dirty," TNR, November 4, 1991). And although the Supreme Court said in 1986 that sexually explicit speech has to be severe, pervasive and "unwanted" to create an abusive environment, lower courts have applied the confusing test more expansively.

A 1992 article in the *UCLA Law Review* by Eugene Volokh, who is now a law clerk for Sandra Day O'Connor, collects the most senseless of the recent cases. One court said that the use of gender-based job titles (like "draftsman" or "foreman") could be actionable. Another court required an employer to proscribe any "sexually suggestive" material, defined broadly enough to include reproductions of classical paintings.

The charges in the pending Supreme Court case, *Teresa Harris* v. *Forklift Systems*, fall somewhere between the extremes; and they are awkwardly similar to Anita Hill's charges against Clarence Thomas. Harris, a manager at a Nashville forklift company, was offended by the denigrating comments of her supervisor, Charles Hardy, such as, "You're a dumb ass woman ... what do you know?" Hardy also asked Harris and other female employees to fish for quarters in his pants pocket, and had a running joke that "large-breasted women are that way because they eat a lot of corn." After failing to complain for two years, Harris finally confronted Hardy, who said he had been joking and promised to stop. A month later, however, he asked Harris whether she had promised to "bugger" a customer to get an account. She quit, saying she had been sexually harassed.

The judge disagreed. Other female employees, he noted, said they were not offended by Hardy's jokes and were surprised to learn that Harris had been offended. Applying the tests for "hostile environment" harassment that several courts have adopted, the judge concluded that Harris showed no signs of serious "psychological injury" as a result of Hardy's comments. He also found that the comments, although offensive, would not have interfered with the job performance of a "reasonable woman."

In their Supreme Court briefs, both sides agree that the judge was wrong to use "psychological injury" as a touchstone of the existence of a "hostile environment." They argue that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in the "terms, conditions or privileges" of employment, does not require that employees tolerate harassment until it drives them to the brink of mental illness. Hard-line difference feminists want to retain a broad definition of "hostile environment" that might include jokes, pinups and offensive slang. But in their briefs, at least, a surprisingly eclectic coalition of amicus groups, including the EEOC, the Justice Department and a group called "Feminists for Free Expression," is asking the Court to replace the "hostile environment" test with a test that requires evidence of tangible interference with work performance.

The Feminists for Free Expression argue that the "hostile environment" test subverts equality as well as free speech in the workplace. The effort to shield women by bowdlerizing the speech of men enshrines archaic stereotypes of women as delicate creatures who need special protection from words and images. The generalization that women are more likely to be offended by scatology than men also seems like the sort of romantic paternalism that title VII was designed to erase. Accordingly, Feminists for Free Expression propose the following replacement for the "hostile environment" test: a pattern of conduct or expression that is directed at a specific employee; which a reasonable person would experience as harassment; and which has substantially hindered the employee's job performance.

The requirement that harassment must be directed at specific employees would solve the pinup problem, ensuring that nude calendars or magazines, and overheard conversations between willing listeners, would have the same protection at work and at home. (In her new book, *Only Words*, by contrast, MacKinnon invokes the logic of the "hostile environment" test to ban pornography at home *and* at work.) It would also call into question the new definition of harassment that the EEOC proposed on October 1, which includes "written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group," placed anywhere in the workplace.

The requirement that harassment cannot be punished unless job performance suffers is even more important.

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It would shift the focus of harassment trials from subjective offensiveness to the objective harm; and would ensure that offensive speech with no tangible effects on employment conditions would remain protected. (Employers would be free, however, to encourage civility in informal ways.)

Feminists are divided, finally, about whether sexual harassment should be viewed from the perspective of the "reasonable woman" or the "reasonable person." The special treatment camp argues that a sexless, "reasonable person" standard ignores the different perspectives of women. The equal treatment camp counters that for centuries stereotypes about "reasonable women" have been used to enshrine the idea that women are unable to cope with ordinary job pressures.

Both positions are unsatisfying. In practice, the difference between the "reasonable person" and the "reasonable woman" is elusive, since most courts blend the two standards by considering the perspective of a "reasonable person in the employee's position." And the conceit that gender differences can always be abstracted away is just as misguided as the conceit that gender differences can never be transcended. A 1985 study cited by the American Psychological Association, for example, found that men were four times more likely to predict that women would be flattered by sexual overtures at work, and four times less likely to predict that they would be insulted. But as Ruth Bader Ginsburg noted in a 1988 speech: "Generalizations about the way women or men are ... cannot guide me reliably in making decisions about particular individuals."

Relying on the language of Title VII, which prohibits discrimination "against any individual," the Court could abandon its search for the *reasonable* victim and instead consider harassment from the perspective of the *actual* victim. It is an axiom of common law, after all, that you take your victims as you find them. And the requirement that harassment must be "severe and pervasive" would protect employers from rare, hypersensitive employees. Ever since the Civil Rights Act of 1991, furthermore, most harassment cases go before jurors, who tend to be rooted in reality. If an employee says she is harmed by one term of endearment, she is unlikely to convince her peers.

The best harassment test, in short, is the one Nadine Strossen of the ACLU proposed in 1984: a severe pattern of conduct or expression, directed at a specific employee, that demonstrably hinders his or her job performance. Would Teresa Harris, or Anita Hill, pass the test? Probably not. Harris said she was driven to drink; and Hill said she developed nervous cramps; but neither woman indicated that her job performance noticeably suffered. Although lamentable, the ordeals of Harris and Hill are mild compared with the ordeals of most successful sexual harassment plaintiffs, who endure physical and psychological abuse that few people would consider trivial. By rejecting a definition of sexual harassment that confuses tasteless jokes with genuine assaults, the Court can vindicate a jurisprudence of equality over a jurisprudence of difference. •

Integration in South Africa's military.

MARTIAL RULE

By Alon Peled

As South Africa prepares for democratic rule, there are hopeful signs that the transition will be a relatively smooth one. The government and the African National Congress have reached an agreement on a date—April 27, 1994—for elections in which blacks will cast their ballots for the first time. Last month, international sanctions against the country were lifted at Nelson Mandela's request. Whites and blacks have already begun preparing to share control of the country's institutions.

But the more complicated issues of power-sharing have yet to be negotiated. And of these issues, surely the most vexing concerns who will control the military and the armed forces during the transition to democracy. If senior military officers refuse to obey the orders of Mandela and a government dominated by the ANC, South Africa may share the fate common to so many African countries: coup d'état, military intervention and an entrenched, brutal, authoritarian regime. Similarly, if black and white guerrilla organizations refuse to disarm themselves, the country may fall prey to yet another grim African scenario: protracted civil war. To avoid the path of its neighbors, South Africa needs an apolitical and racially integrated military and police force that supports the new democratic government.

For the moment, however, the current government and the ANC appear at odds over the issue. On March 27, Lieutenant General George Meiring, the chief of staff of the South Africa Defense Forces, declared that he was willing to accept the incorporation of members of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (M.K.), into the armed forces. General Meiring attached several conditions, however: M.K. members would join the military as individuals, disassociate themselves from former political affiliations and conform to the professional standards of the military. But this open invitation to ANC members to join the military was his alone; it was not seconded by government officials. Three days later, Law and Order Minister Hernus Kriel declared that the government "was not interested in joint control over criminals." For its part, the ANC was also quick to denounce Meiring's proposal. "As far as we are concerned, the military is still an illegitimate organization which fought for apartheid and as yet does not represent the nation," spokesman Carl Niehaus said.

Despite such bluster, peaceful reform of the police

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and military is possible. But it will require more than the mere integration of the ranks to gain the approval of the ANC, and to win the trust of blacks. The police and the army will have to be radically restructured. To their credit, both institutions have begun, slowly and cautiously, to prepare for the inevitable changes.

The 100,000-member police force will require the most extensive changes. The police bear the brunt of the ANC's wrath; their violent abuse of power in the townships during the apartheid years has not been forgotten. Recently, in an effort to stem criticism, the police began promoting black and colored officers. But the move is regarded as a public relations stunt and it will not satisfy the ANC; black officers remain hated by the majority of South African blacks. (Indeed, most of the 226 police officers killed by militant blacks during 1992 were black. Many were regarded by their assassins as sell-outs to the white regime.) It may be necessary for the new South African government to rebuild the entire police force from scratch in order to convince township residents that police officers are guardians of public safety rather than murderers. Already the government has installed a 10,000-man "Peacekeeping Force" composed of SADF soldiers, police officers and former members of the M.K. armed units, which may eventually take the place of the current police force.

The military has traditionally attracted less black animosity. While it has generally supported police activities, it has never been at the forefront of enforcing apartheid policy. Although far from popular among blacks, the military is commonly believed, by both white and black South Africans, to have a legitimate mandate to defend the state against external threats. Government and ANC officials alike understand that the state must hold an absolute monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Any other arrangement, such as one that allows guerrilla groups to retain their weapons and continue to train and employ their own men, has the potential to lead to civil war between armed bands representing different political and ethnic factions. Thus, outlandish as it may seem, the only possible long-term solution is to integrate these rebel paramilitary organizations into the South African military. Doing so would present a problem: Would a white army captain take orders from a black major who formerly belonged to the M.K.? Would former M.K. soldiers obey career military officers in pursuing radicals opposed to the National Peace Accord? It would seem that integration is unlikely to work. But there are reasons to be optimistic.

Though it is not well known, the SADF is already partially integrated. The military enlisted nonwhite soldiers throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. In fact, the military's record in this area was far better than that of any other social institution. Nonwhite soldiers were admitted to the Permanent Force, sent to study with whites in military schools and trained for combat. More nonwhite soldiers were admitted after 1977, as black soldiers were enlisted to fight along the border in southwest Africa. Salaries and service benefits for white and black servicemen were made equal.

Still, while the number of blacks in the SADF has risen (according to reliable estimates, 40 percent of the regular Army units are currently manned by blacks), the number of black officers is still very small. Until two years ago, only a handful of blacks were permitted to become officers. Thus, the number of black officers in the SADF today is estimated at only a few dozen. Currently, only one black officer in the SADF holds the rank of major—the rest are first and second lieutenants. The SADF explains that the promotion of young officers—black and white alike—to the rank of colonel and above takes an average of ten years.

But it is hard to believe that an ANC government will be willing to wait a decade before the first black general is commissioned in an army that soon will be composed mostly of blacks. One solution would be to integrate black officers from the M.K. and the homeland armies into the SADF. Most senior homeland officers were trained by the SADF anyway, so they are already familiar with its rules. The SADF is also planning intensive courses that will assist black officers in acquiring technical and command skills necessary to meet Army standards—something that was unthinkable just one year ago. However, this still leaves a more complicated issue: what to do with the black soldiers and officers who now make up extremist military groups. The newly integrated SADF may not want to include these guerrillas; but they cannot simply be ignored. If left out, the guerrilla groups may refuse to disarm. In an early effort to appease the extremists, the SADF is working on a compromise plan: officers within such groups will be given the chance to serve for a short time (say, two years) and then retire with the rank, pension and benefits of a full colonel. The program will be expensive, but not as expensive as constant, bloody skirmishes between the SADF and guerrillas would be.

Conversely, the SADF is also working on an early retirement program for its current officers. By one military estimate, as many as 6,000 officers have already signed on this year. Many are right wingers who oppose the idea of an ANC government taking charge of the SADF. (Some have joined with the Afrikaner People's Front, the new umbrella organization comprising seventy conservative groups.) Their retirement improves prospects for integration of homeland armed forces and M.K. officers into the military.

These are, of course, first steps in what will be a long process. There are still many apparent (and many more unforeseen) problems to be overcome. But the willingness of the South African military and police forces to consider reform seriously, even as politicians on both sides bark at one another, is heartening. The same institutions once charged with enforcing apartheid, it seems, are those now most prepared to hasten its demise.

ALON PELED is a Mellon and Kennedy Fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

No Profit, No Loss

Voucher supporters often say that American public education is run like the command economy that crippled the former Soviet Union, and if it is to improve, it needs to adopt a market system. The key to school improvement, we are told, is competition. When parents have vouchers to spend for education, public schools will be forced to be more responsive to what parents want. Schools whose teachers and administrators are successful at figuring out how to attract customers will flourish. Schools that continue losing customers will eventually fail and go out of business.

Subjecting schools to market competition sounds appealing. However, when you look closely at the analogy between schools and businesses on which this scenario depends, it falls apart. Markets are based on profit and loss, but public schools and almost all private and parochial schools are nonprofit. So even if a school attracts a lot of students, nobody makes any profit on them because each student brings only enough money to educate himself or herself.

There's an old joke that recognizes this situation. It's about a guy who manufactures a product that costs $125 to make and sells for $100. He brings his sales reps together and urges them to increase their sales. When one of the reps points out that they're losing money on each item they sell, he says, "What we lose on the individual items, we'll make up on volume."

The principal and teachers of a popular voucher school would not get more money if the school attracted and admitted more students. All they'd get is a more crowded school.

The principal and teachers of a popular voucher school would not get more money if the school attracted and admitted more students. All they'd get is a more crowded school. It's true that extra students share in the costs of keeping up the common facilities, so they could be a plus from an administrative point of view. Also, if a school has a sixth-grade class with 20 kids and could accommodate 23, it could admit youngsters to fill these places without having to hire another teacher or principal or provide more heat. But changes like these are marginal, and they don't constitute profit.

Perhaps a few popular schools would try to raise money to expand so they could accommodate more customers, but since there is no profit or loss, most would not—especially at a time when the majority of educational thinkers agree that small schools do a better job than bigger ones.

What vouchers would do is greatly increase the number of students applying to popular schools. So the principal result of vouchers would be to allow popular schools to be more selective than they already are (and perhaps raise tuition).

What about the effect of vouchers on unpopular schools that might lose students? Of course if a school lost all its students, it would close, though in large systems teachers usually have rights to move to another school. That situation wouldn't arise very often. In most cases, parents are not eager to pull kids out of schools the youngsters are familiar with and where their friends are going. If some students did take their vouchers and leave for private or other public schools, that probably would not seriously affect teachers' and administrators' jobs. There are always retirements and teachers going on maternity leave and resignations, so even if there were fewer students, few, if any, people would lose their jobs.

Kids have been leaving our urban schools for the suburban and private schools for years, and you seldom hear about principals and teachers getting together in a state of panic and deciding to call the parents to find out why the students have left or to persuade them to come back. Why? Because nobody on staff has lost anything. Just as the principal and teachers don't get more money because more students enroll in their school, no one in a school that loses students gets less.

In a system where each customer brings a profit, there's no question that businesses compete so they will attract more customers. But in nonprofit systems, like the one proposed in the California voucher initiative, talking about a "market" or "customers" is mere rhetoric.

Some might say that we shouldn't limit voucher systems to nonprofit schools. But we have had substantial experience with government subsidies to for-profit schools, and most of it has been terrible. Under the GI bill, for example, the services provided by many for-profit schools were a bad joke—at the expense of the students. So we know it would take an extensive bureaucracy to monitor a system that included for-profit schools.

What incentives are needed to get people in schools to behave like successful businesses that continuously monitor their performance and try to improve it?—That's what voucher supporters in California and elsewhere are asking. It's the right question, but they have the wrong answer.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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Richard Riordan's big ambitions.

THE NEW BOSS

By L.J. Davis

As jobs go, the mayoralty of Los Angeles bears a close resemblance to Dr. Johnson's talking dog (or was it a mathematical horse?): the wonder of the thing is not that anybody would want to do it well, but that anyone would want to do it at all. Thanks to decades of unabashed, wildly successful civic boosterism, Los Angeles's mayor presides as titular head of a city that exists in a place where no city should ever have been built. Thanks to equally long decades of so-called Good Government reforms (combined with the unspoken but powerful determination of the business community to keep the incumbent from getting too big for his britches), the mayor of L.A. is also the only mayor of a major American metropolis who can't fire his own police chief—with results that were all too graphically on display before, during and after last year's riots, when the chief of police seemed to have lost every vestige of good sense, if not his mind. True, the mayor of Los Angeles is not without certain powers: he can, for example, appoint most of his own commissioners, just like any other big-city mayor. Unfortunately, the city council has to approve them, which (among other things) makes its members uppity.

I am simplifying, of course: if anything, the actual situation is even worse. Given the peculiar, self-canceling way Los Angeles is governed, the occupant of the mayor's office in its downtown art deco tower—a surprisingly dim place, by the way, once one gets inside—invariably finds himself acting much like his predecessors, devoting a great deal of unproductive time to tub-thumping and ribbon-snipping. (It was said of the recently retired Tom Bradley that he would attend the opening of a drawer if enough people clapped when he did it.) Why, then, did Richard J. Riordan, a distinctly odd duck but a very rich one, not only go out of his way to seek the mayor's job but actually go out of his way to win it?

Riordan is a Catholic intellectual who studied under Jacques Maritain, one of the founders of liberation theology, at Princeton in the 1950s, and later became a centimillionaire corporate lawyer/leveraged-buyout artist who took money from Michael Milken and lived to tell the tale. Despite all this, he nonetheless seemed to come out of nowhere when he strode triumphantly into City Hall earlier this year. Virtually unknown to the many millions who have never opened the business pages, *Legal Times* or the ledgers of the archdiocese, Riordan had long seemed to be the kind of amiable bumbler who fell asleep at business meetings, appeared in his office wearing mismatched shoes and drove a Mercedes sports sedan that literally was filled to the window ledges with discarded fast-food containers and other trash. Moreover, he frequently spoke of his clients and business affairs with the sort of unlawyerly candor that most people reserve for their deathbed or their confessor—a trait common to both the dumb and the powerful, which makes it hard to tell them apart. To his admirers, this sort of behavior was part of his charm; to his detractors, it was an artful disguise.

But Richard Riordan didn't assemble his fortune by driving around in a firetrap any more than he became mayor of his city by dozing over Thomas Aquinas in his Brentwood mansion. In fact, Riordan was not only an accomplished deal-maker in his own right, he was also that most vitally important and invisible of urban figures: the go-between who facilitated the deals of others, both business-to-business and business-to-government. There are people like Riordan in every city, of course: men and women (but mostly men) who make themselves agreeable to the rich and famous, who just happen to have a neutral conference room and a limitless supply of patience and charm, and who can thus guide matters to a conclusion profitable to all, including the amiable chap who arranged the picnic to begin with. But if the Riordans of the world are commonplace in the nation's circles of power, in Los Angeles they are essential—largely, I think, because of the historical accident that reduced the kinglet in City Hall to a puppet in the service of a few. Los Angeles, virtually alone of major American cities, never had an equivalent of Tammany Hall.

During its long day in the political sun, Tammany and its clones elevated many a jack to office and boggled many doons from New York to San Francisco, but it also did something without precedent or sequel in American politics: the working stiffs of Tammany forever changed the face of American urban politics by unseating their social, educational and much richer betters. In modern political-babble, Tammany had empowered the poor, at least for a while. In the process, and for reasons that were only in part self-serving, Tammany also created the only successful system ever devised for governing a major, multiethnic and turbulent American city, a fact notably missing from the history books, because in this case the history was written by the defeated. But in Los Angeles, Tammany never happened: the power elite never lost control to the great unwashed because the great unwashed were either elsewhere or out of sight.

To paint the situation with a broad and convenient brush, the most visible bastions of the ruling classes were two. The stately old California Club on downtown Flower Street was symbolic of conservative old money, where fortunes were heavily dependent on the invest-

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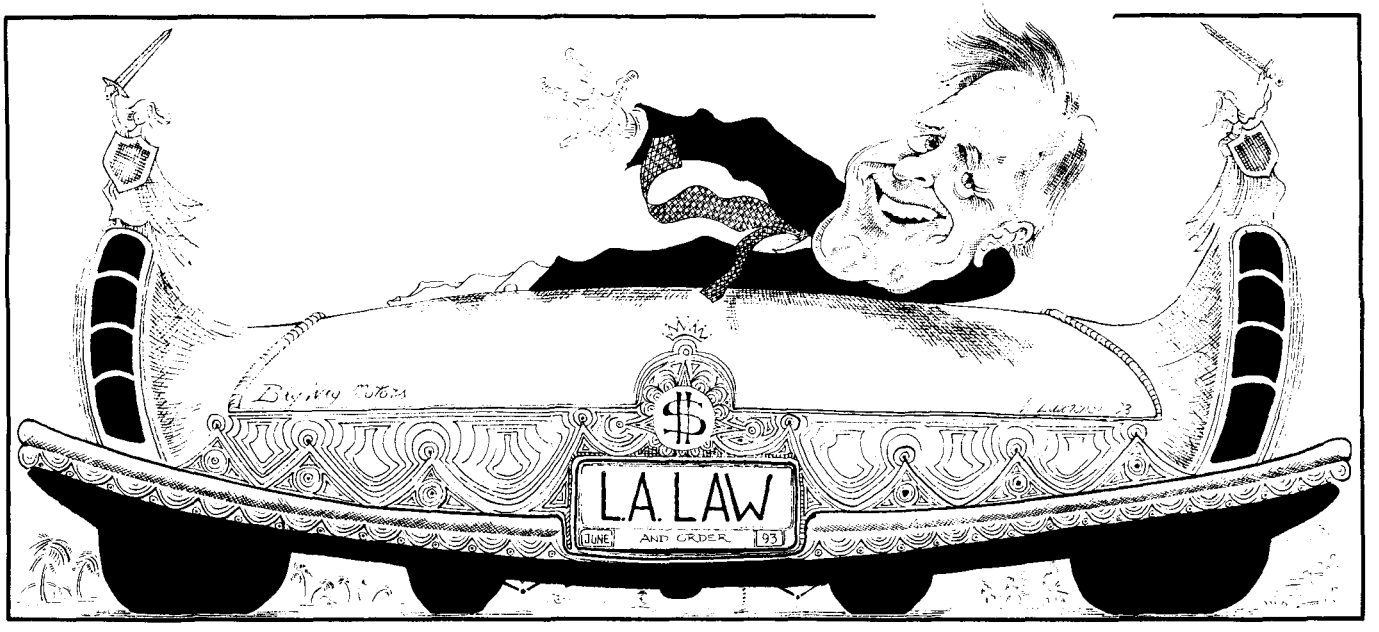
ments of the forefathers in the decaying urban core. For the newer, more Jewish, somewhat more liberally inclined money of the West Side, the same purpose was served by the Hillcrest Country Club, where suburban real estate speculation and related financial services ruled the roost together with the entertainment industry. (The agendas of the region's other big industries—petroleum and aerospace—were national and global; the government of the city, although requiring an occasional glance and guiding hand, was not nearly as important to them as the government in Washington.)

To each group, geography was destiny, destiny was cash and cash was power. This would seem to create a community of interest, but it did no such thing, for the burghers of the California Club had a notion of geography that was very different from that of their Hillcrest counterparts. This is where Riordan came in. The downtown crowd, of which he was a part, had a keen interest in salvaging grandpa's inner-city real estate, which could be rescued only by a massive infusion of redevelopment money emanating from or channeled through City Hall. The West Siders, on the other hand—and Riordan was one of them, too—made their money by thrusting their development schemes ever outward, into the increasingly irrational and inhospitable landscape of the urban fringe, which required a mayor who would keep his mitts off their plans and his money far from the grasp of those on Flower Street.

The mayor's job consisted of either distributing the necessary largess or exercising the necessary restraint. It was Richard Riordan's job to clarify the mayor's thinking. And he had both the power and the access to do so. Riordan, a right-wing Republican, served as president of the park and recreation commission in Bradley's supposedly liberal Democratic administration. (To students of American urban politics in search of power brokers, the park commission is the place to look.) He was also a generous contributor to the mayor's political hopes, and he knew many wealthy persons of similar kidney.

In a city that never had a Tammany Hall, Richard Riordan had become the indispensable man, an invisible presence that was both everywhere and nowhere. In the American political lexicon, there is a crude, unsatisfactory name for this sort of behavior, although it was rarely uttered in the earthly paradise of Southern California: it is bossism. And it is in the nature of the boss never to reveal that the dummy is actually the ventriloquist, never to visibly gather the reigns of power into his own hands by seizing elective office. Never, that is, unless the local political equation begins to change in ways that challenge the vested interests he so effectively serves and no pliable surrogate is available. It is at this point that the boss defies the unspoken rules and becomes mayor himself. It happened in Boston and it happened in Chicago. And if my guess is correct, it just happened in Los Angeles.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The problem was a simple one: Los Angeles suddenly realized that it would have a Hispanic majority by the turn of the century, and that most of these Hispanics were poor, alienated, ambitious and sorely in need of guidance. Controlling the mayor was no longer enough; Riordan had to *become* mayor to inject the sort of right thinking that would preserve the power of the Flower Street and Hillcrest clients he had served so long and so well. (It didn't help matters that Bradley, late in life and late in career, showed signs of rattling his cage by returning to his liberal roots.) And, uniquely, the necessary political revolution would have to come down from the top, not up from the bottom. To preserve the status quo, Riordan—like Tammany before him—would have to preside over a revolution that would give the Latin poor an equal stake in the fate and wealth of their city.

The architect of this revolution is the strangest rich man I've ever known, whose thoughts are sometimes not of this world and often appear to be unclear even

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to himself—and yet both are ruthlessly focused. It may very well have been a personal spiritual crisis, for example, that led Riordan, a divorced man, to reconcile with his church in 1987, just in time to be introduced to the pope during the pontiff's visit to the city. It may be the merest coincidence that the reconciliation took place just as a kindred spirit, Roger Mahoney, became the city's cardinal-archbishop and the local political landscape began to change in unpredictable ways with the arrival of an immigrant wave of the Catholic persuasion. And Riordan, losing favor with Bradley—a spent force—swiftly ingratiated himself with their spiritual leader.

Riordan had prepared his ground for the mayor's race. And he was helped by his opponent, Michael Woo, who offered only platitudes, while Riordan talked about jobs and public order. The resulting contest was nasty, Irish and short. In a city torn by riots, with its economy devastated by the collapse of the Evil Empire and the resultant loss of jobs in the defense industry, a paycheck and a cop on the corner consigned bird-watching and politically correct utterance to the dustbin of history. Riding a wave of middle class anger and fear, and with roughly half the Hispanic vote, Richard Riordan became mayor of Los Angeles in the 1993 elections.

For Mayor Riordan, it is early times, although there have been some interesting developments. By definition, a boss must rule as well as reign, and the weak mayor system will have to go—but quietly, in the Riordan manner, without changing the city charter by a jot or a tittle until the moment is ripe. (Tammany always knew how to wait and when to spring.) In the interval, Riordan has appointed the head of the police union as his deputy mayor for public safety—a move that will doubtless cause the police chief to think very hard indeed about the wishes of City Hall. Although once again accompanied in public by a woman not his wife, he has retained the cardinal's goodwill. (With 2,000 years of practice, the Church also knows when to stay its hand.)

But successful bossism involves a balancing act of surpassing delicacy. As mayor, it is no longer enough for Riordan to assist his old friends on Flower Street, the West Side and in the cardinal's chancery. He must also practice the politics of inclusion, assisting old friends while causing whole new blocs of voters to rally to his banner before they begin thinking unmanageably independent thoughts. This normally requires the skillful use of public money. In a place where the stuff has been rather thin on the ground, the new mayor has made up for an empty till by distributing presents that cost him nothing.

Riordan's proposal to decentralize the city's unified school district is one such gift. While the idea has long outraged political liberals and educators, it plays well with the middle class of the San Fernando Valley, who were so generous with their votes, and with at least some of the blacks of devastated South-Central; they may hate, fear and suspect each other, but they share a common interest in guiding the educational destiny of their children rather than being guided. At the same time, Riordan has formed a close political alliance with the head of the municipal transportation commission, another institution normally beyond the mayoral writ, which has lots of money to spend and runs the city's buses and trains; buses and trains are of little interest to the middle class, who drive cars, but are a matter of keen concern to the poorer blacks and Hispanics, who need them to get to work. (It also should not escape our attention—for it surely has not escaped Mayor Riordan's—that the city's new subway and light rail systems terminate in downtown, much to the benefit of the Flower Street crowd, while giving the West Siders a speculative land play around the outlying stations.)

The mayor's attacks on the city's air quality, and land use regulations and a host of other bureaucratic procedures have served him equally well. Though they have outraged the environmental lobby, they have pleased ambitious Mexican-Americans, who think elitist government rules prevent them from starting their own businesses. And when Governor Pete Wilson garnered much favorable publicity by suggesting that the state's many problems could be laid at the door of illegal immigrants, Mayor Riordan effectively told the governor—a fellow Republican—to go soak his head and keep his mouth shut until he knew what he was talking about. Riordan has long insisted that illegal immigrants are among the most vigorously productive inhabitants of the city he now rules, but he is also aware that their children will either tear up another segment of the public fabric, or else they will vote. As the quintessential political boss, Riordan wants them to vote. And he wants those votes in his pocket.

Recently, and for the first time in memory, the mayor's budget raced past the usually fractious City Council as though on Rollerblades. In part, this remarkable event may be due to the brief honeymoon any new chief executive enjoys. In part, too, it may be due to the fact that the document finally provided a significant number of new police officers for the most underpoliced (and brutally policed) large city in the country—to say nothing of providing the new deputy mayor with many new union members and the new mayor with yet more ammunition when the time arrives to attract the chief's attention. But it should not be forgotten that Mayor Riordan is a man who knows the location of many graves, that his career has given him the power to bestow certain gifts not mentioned in either the city's charter or its budget and that he is a dangerously adroit opponent when crossed. In Los Angeles, as Riordan deploys the tools of the nineteenth century to drag his city into the twenty-first, the next few years should be very interesting. But Tammany was always interesting.

L.J. DAVIS is a contributing editor to *Buzz* magazine.

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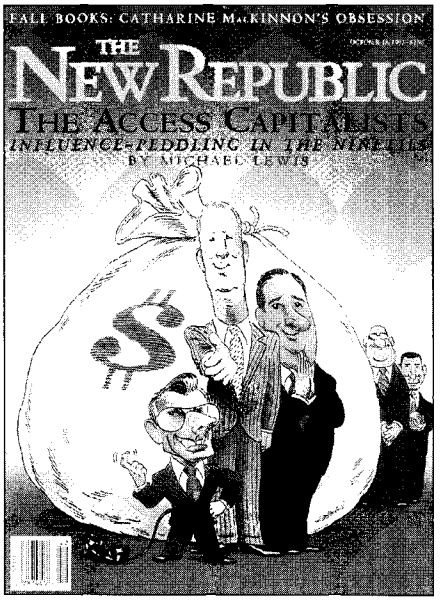

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THE END OF THE RAINBOW

By Jim Sleeper

On a trip to Israel in July, New York Mayor David Dinkins's eyes welled with tears as he recalled a close friendship with his accountant of many years, the late Abe Nowick, a Jew, in which racial differences had mattered so little that "one didn't know what the other was." It was a moment emblematic of the healer New Yorkers hoped Dinkins would be when they elected him over U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani in 1989, shortly after young whites in Brooklyn's Bensonhurst section murdered Yusef Hawkins, a black youth who had wandered onto their turf to look at a used car. It was emblematic, too, of the promise of black "Rainbow" mayoralties in multiracial cities in the 1970s and 1980s—Tom Bradley in Los Angeles, Harold Washington in Chicago and Wilson Goode in Philadelphia, to name a few.

Yet, just as those other rainbows have faded, the ecumenical side of Dinkins on display in Jerusalem has been eclipsed in the years since his "Vote your hopes, not your fears" victory four years ago. Challenged by Giuliani again this year, Dinkins has been reduced in part to running a "Vote your fears" campaign. A string of recent public claims by Dinkins supporters that Giuliani is backed by the Ku Klux Klan, fascists and Reaganites (although conservatives such as William Bennett and Pat Buchanan denounce Giuliani as a liberal) may coax some voters back into Dinkins' corner. But a victory at this price would hardly repeat the harmonic convergence that was once the rationale for a Dinkins candidacy.

What went wrong? There are two reasons for the decay of Dinkins's rainbow politics, neither peculiar to New York. First, a deep recession and economic upheaval demand a "reinventing" of local government that seems utterly beyond the reach of a mayor whose political style is more common in Europe than in America: that of a social-democratic wheelhorse. Dinkins's failure to articulate a rationale for municipal restructuring, much less attempt it against union and black clubhouse opposition, is one reason his government is torn by racial and other subgroup squabbling over jobs, entitlements and preferments.

Second, Dinkins's failures of leadership during a long, black boycott of Korean stores and amid black rioting against Hasidic Jews in Crown Heights are only the best-known of many abdications to the politics of victimization (among them his year-long delay of a contract for street toilets in deference to activists' demands that each one be wheelchair accessible). Such muddlings highlight the rainbow ideology's tendency to deepen racial and other differences in the name of respecting them; in the zero-sum game of urban governance, identity politics implodes.

Meanwhile Giuliani, the erstwhile altar boy with a Savonarola streak and a mostly-white inner circle, has created a Republican-liberal "fusion" slate, with Herman Badillo, the city's most distinguished Hispanic politician, running for comptroller. They claim they want to subordinate parochial grievances to a single, uniform civic standard. Alluding to the Korean boycott, Giuliani says he wants to convince blacks that "If I were mayor and some Italian-Americans were intimidating a black shopkeeper, I'd come down on them hard and fast. People have to be able to feel confident that they'll be protected, whatever the mayor's color."

It's a familiar pattern. Beyond New York, the Rainbow habit of crying racism has found itself discounted by voters of all colors who want better governance and less rhetoric. Politically centrist mayoral candidates, many of them, ironically, white men, have drawn substantial numbers of nonwhite voters into new coalitions—call them Rainbow II—by touting a can-do pragmatism and a common civic identity that is more than the sum of skin tones, genders, sexual orientations and resentments. The truth they've grasped remains obscure only to some in liberal Democratic circles and the academy: The more genuinely multicultural and racially diverse a city becomes, the less "liberal" it is in the Rainbow I sense of the term.

The pattern emerges from half a dozen donnybrooks of the past three years, including Houston and Philadelphia in 1991 and Los Angeles and Jersey City in 1992. In each, the liberal candidate, usually a person of color, had the mantle of the civil rights movement, the support of a multiracial, multicultural coalition and the endorsement of Jesse Jackson. He was militantly pro-

JIM SLEEPER is a columnist for *The New York Daily News* and the author of *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York* (Norton).

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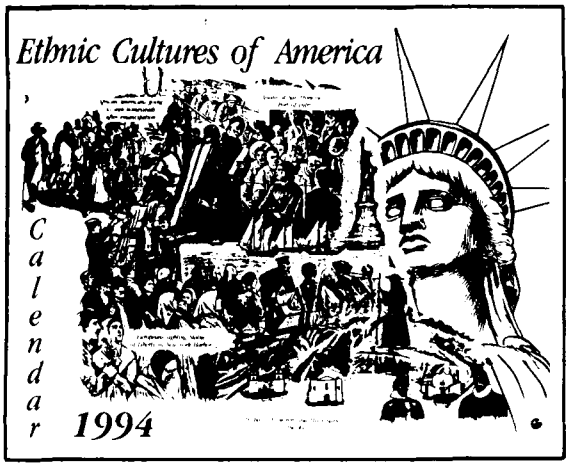

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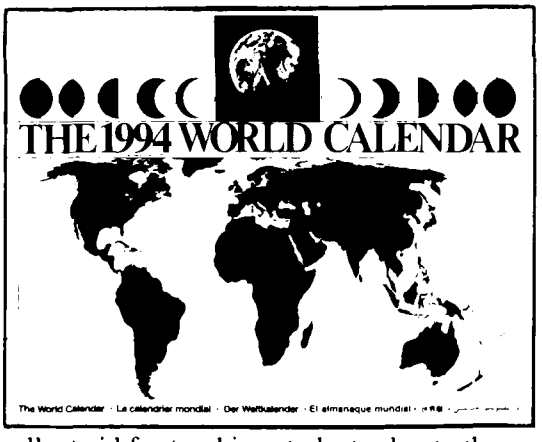

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choice, anti-death penalty and in favor of the most expansive gay rights and immigrant rights agendas around. He was applauded in black churches and endorsed by liberal newspapers. He may not have had much of an economic program, but he branded his white male opponent a closet Reaganite and sounded the trumpet for "progressive" unity.

The white male opponent, who typically had never held elective office, posed as a businesslike reformer, promising to clean house and create new jobs through commercial deregulation, better public safety, less onerous taxation and tougher union contracts. Preaching tolerance rather than correctness and touting endorsements from prominent Latinos and other minority leaders who had broken with the civil rights establishment, he vowed to unite the city across racial and partisan lines.

Closer examination turns up telling ironies. In Chicago's 1989 special election to fill out the late Harold Washington's term, Richard M. Daley, a son of—but also a reformer of—his father's infamous machine, trounced alderman Timothy Evans, who claimed the mantle of Washington's paradigmatic Rainbow I coalition and was backed enthusiastically by Jackson. Two years later, against a black former judge running on the Harold Washington party line, Daley carried 80 percent of the city's small but critical Latino vote and 26 percent of the black vote (up from just 7 percent in 1989).

Similarly, in Houston in 1991 Robert Lanier, a wealthy white real estate developer and native New Yorker, took 70 percent of the Latino vote to defeat Sylvester Turner, a black, Harvard-educated state legislator backed solidly by blacks and white Rainbow I liberals tied to former Mayor Kathy Whitmire. The popular Lanier—the first candidate in twenty years to be elected mayor with virtually no support from the 25 percent of the city's electorate that is black—is a shoo-in this fall for another two-year term.

That same year in Philadelphia, Edward Rendell, a Jewish New York native and, like Giuliani, a tough-talking ex-prosecutor, won the mayoralty by preaching fiscal austerity and municipal restructuring in a city facing bankruptcy. Campaigning energetically in the black community, he took 20 percent of the black vote against three black Democratic primary opponents before trouncing a Republican to succeed Philadelphia's first black mayor, Wilson Goode.

In July of this year, Los Angeles's Richard Riordan, another native New Yorker and a Wall Street investor, succeeded five-termer Bradley in the 58 percent nonwhite city by carrying 43 percent of the Latino vote, 31 percent of the Asian American vote, 14 percent of the black vote and 67 percent of the white vote against Rainbow I Democrat Michael Woo, a councilman who had led the opposition against Police Chief Daryl Gates. Riordan's Rainbow II is embryonic, at best, however: 72 percent of those who voted in the election were white. He has responded with high-level appointments of blacks, Latinos, Asians and gays.

Across the continent in Jersey City, both mayoral finalists this spring were white, yet the Rainbow II scenario was otherwise unchanged. Republican Wall Street investor Bret Schundler, yet another ex-New Yorker, beat a Jackson-backed Democrat by winning 40 percent of the black vote and 60 percent of the Latino vote in that majority nonwhite city. This, even after Jackson warned in radio spots that his candidate represented "the values of the USA—the United States of America," while a vote for Schundler was a vote for "the values of the USA—the Union of South Africa."

It was, of course, nothing of the kind. Neither was Daley's victory in Chicago—which Jackson tried to prevent by linking Daley to his father's infamous "shoot to kill" order against arsonists in 1968—simply a white racist restoration. The new mayors have won by tapping a growing disillusionment with old-style "civil rights" politics among voters whom the movement has betrayed, and by including new racial minorities who feel excluded by black-led Rainbow I administrations.

The new mayors depart, respectfully but firmly, from the politics of such trailblazing black mayors as Gary, Indiana's Richard Hatcher, Cleveland's Carl Stokes, Atlanta's Maynard Jackson, Detroit's Coleman Young, New Orleans's Ernest "Dutch" Morial, Chicago's Harold Washington and the District of Columbia's Marion Barry. Most of these men were broad-shouldered veterans of elemental, often brutal struggles for racial justice that had honed their leadership qualities and introduced them to class- as well as race-consciousness. Most won narrowly against unyielding white hostility.

In office, they had to outmaneuver scheming white politicians, censorious editorial boards and rebellious subordinates in heavily white municipal work forces. With rhetoric, if not redress, they had to relieve the pent-up frustrations of blacks long exiled from city politics and jobs. Civic elites demanded that they end black crime. Businessmen, taking advantage of the mayors' desperation about economic decay, co-opted them into "big bang" development schemes that siphoned city resources from poor neighborhoods. Detroit's Young became defensive and bitter, Marion Barry dissolute and corrupt. Harold Washington seemed to thrive on frustration, towering over his more parochial black supporters and white adversaries alike, but he died in office. Literally and figuratively, the hearts of black mayors were broken by their divided cities.

At the same time, though, some black trailblazers and their Rainbow I successors have shifted from protecting basic individual rights and mobilizing economic coalitions to touting racial group rights and policies that are gratuitously destructive of traditional families. It's almost as if Rainbow I administrations simply presume, and so accelerate, civic and social balkanization. They often pit blacks against almost everyone else, not just against declining white electorates.

It is here, in the interaction of shifting civil rights strategies and changing urban demographics, that Rainbow I meets its end. In the years after 1970, 10 million

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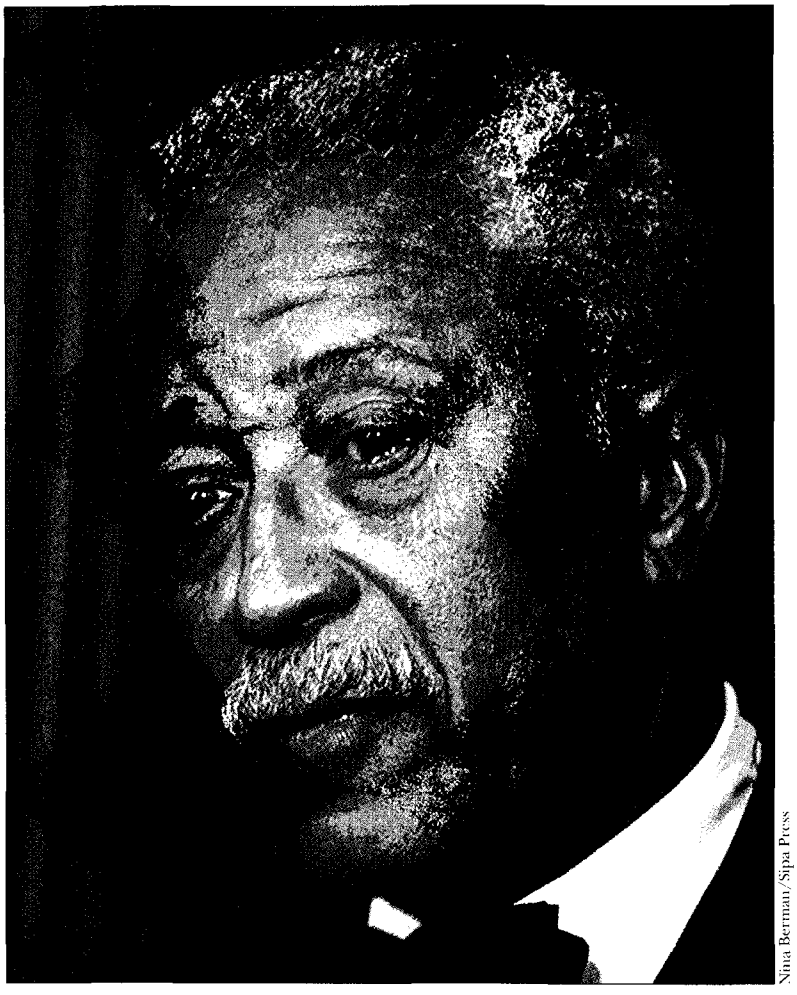
immigrants, the vast majority of them nonwhite, entered American cities. Today, 40 percent of Angelenos and 30 percent of New Yorkers are foreign-born. These Mexican and Filipino laborers, Chinese and Puerto Rican seamstresses, Pakistani and Haitian cabbies and Korean and Dominican merchants often bring with them notions of race that are more fluid and ecumenical than those of American blacks or whites. They don't necessarily embrace a Rainbow I agenda of affirmative action and group rights-oriented litigation that presumes victimization by white racism. They rely more heavily on family and communal ties in order to achieve success.

For example, the immigrants of color in New York City's poorest census tracts are three times more likely than their American black and Puerto Rican neighbors to live in two-parent households. They're more likely to work within ethnic niches of the economy and to favor public spending on police and schools rather than on welfare, foster care, homeless shelters and drug treatment. The median incomes of Caribbean blacks and Asian Indians exceed those of American blacks, blunting charges of institutional racism. Chinese and Mexican immigrants' incomes are lower, but their family structures and values point upward. Even the high level of welfare dependency among Soviet refugees only underscores that culture, not racism, is the key variable in urban success.



Nina Berman/Sipa Press

DAVID DINKINS

Polls and voting patterns suggest that most newcomers are wary of the stigma and polarization that often accompany race-based politics and programs such as all-black schools, racial districting, municipal affirmative action quotas and multicultural curricula. In recent New York City school board elections, ten of thirteen Asian candidates, and half of the Hispanic candidates, ran against a liberal "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum, backed by Dinkins, and Giuliani has sometimes led Dinkins in polls of Asians and Latinos.

The future is visible in an editorial in San Diego's Mexican-American newspaper *La Prensa*, cited recently by Jack Miles in *The Atlantic*, that heralds Latinos as the new "bridge between blacks, whites, Asians and Latinos. They [Latinos] will have to bring an end to class, color and ethnic warfare. To succeed, they will have to do what the blacks failed to do: incorporate all into the human race and exclude no one."

Demographic change is also accelerating Rainbow I's passing by diminishing black clout. Latinos, vital to Rainbow II victories, now outnumber blacks in Los Angeles and will do so in New York, Houston and Jersey City by the next census. Latinos have long outnumbered blacks in such Sunbelt and Western cities as Miami, San Antonio and Denver; the last two elected Henry Cisneros and Federico Peña, both now in Clinton's Cabinet, an honor shared by no former black mayor. The risk is that the new, multiracial coalitions will be openly anti-black.

Yet Rainbow II politics are by no means off-limits to black mayors, who do well among whites when they abandon a Rainbow I agenda. In 1989 Cleveland's Michael White became Rainbow II's first prominent black mayoral standard-bearer after defeating a "blacker-than-thou" opponent; he is a shoo-in for re-election next month. Denver and Seattle, both about 70 percent white, elected Wellington Webb and Norman Rice, black mayors who defy Rainbow I stereotypes. Both practice fiscal conservatism and reject race-based politics. Similarly, Chester Jenkins, the black mayor of mostly white Durham, North Carolina, credits Jesse Jackson with energizing black voters, but, describing his own campaign, says, "I didn't speak of a rainbow coalition. I'm sure that turns a lot of white people off. People think that when a black person is running, he is going to be a big taxer and spender. I'm not that way." Even in heavily black cities, where the first black mayors have left the field to black candidates hawking everything from nationalist paranoia to race-neutral economic realism, debate is less often foreclosed by charges that any candidate's views are racist.

But it's one thing for Rainbow II mayors to win by argu-

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ing that the poor, who want to live decently, and the middle class, which wants to live safely, have a common interest in restructuring government. Actually shifting government's emphasis from bureaucratic compassion to urban reconstruction is harder. A disabled federal government—the legacy of Reaganomics—forces mayors to choose between aiding today's casualties and making investments that might prevent more casualties tomorrow.

There's a flawed Democratic legacy at work here, too: In the 1960s, Great Society funding drove cities to increase the social welfare portions of their budgets from around 15 percent to as much as 30 percent. Today, most cities can't meet their needs merely through tough bargaining, more productivity and privatization. The choices mayors face do follow racial fault lines, imperiling efforts to put civic-consciousness above race-consciousness.

One who seems undaunted by these risks is Edward Rendell, the new mayor of Philadelphia. A city of 1.6 million people, it is about half white, 40 percent black and 6 percent Latino. A son of Manhattan's West Side with a voice like Mel Brooks, he moved to Philadelphia to attend the University of Pennsylvania and served as district attorney before winning the mayoralty in 1991.

The city had become insolvent in the late 1980s under its first black mayor, Wilson Goode. Its bonds had been downgraded, it was borrowing at credit card rates and it was running a structural deficit amounting to 10 percent of its $2.3 billion budget, owing to the collapse of its manufacturing base, federal cutbacks and generous union contracts. Goode, a stiff Wharton manager and a passive subscriber to Rainbow I nostrums, had alienated blacks as well as whites while deferring necessary reforms. His infamous bombing of MOVE headquarters in 1985, which destroyed a block of residential homes, was only a symptom of his lack of command.

With Goode retiring, Rendell decided to run against three black Democratic candidates by presenting himself as a "New Democrat," an apostle of David Osborne's and Ted Gaebler's *Reinventing Government*. When the candidates were asked whether they would accept a strike of city workers if it was necessary to turn the city around, "the other three hemmed and hawed," Rendell recalled in an interview with *Newsday*. "I looked in the camera and said, 'I hope it doesn't become necessary, but there's a decent chance it will. The answer to your question is yes. I don't want a strike, but if a strike's necessary to bring about the type of changes we need, then I'm ready.' " Rendell's strong personality and the city's desperate straits made the election a referendum on whether Philadelphia could look beyond color for candor about its condition.

Rendell could promise not to roll back blacks' political gains relative to whites' because, thanks to enlightened civil service reforms in the '50s, Philadelphia had long had a municipal work force as black as its population. As early as 1964, its police department had been 22 percent black, while nearby Newark and Detroit were at 5 percent. Equally important, Philadelphia has a 20-year-old black political establishment that predated Goode and doesn't countenance the superheated racial rhetoric common in New York or Detroit. Rendell won an absolute majority in a four-way primary, carrying 20 percent of the black vote against his black opponents. "It's not that the era of the black mayor is over," he reflected, "The era of blacks voting lockstep for black candidates is over."

In office, Rendell forged an alliance with newly elected City Council President John Street. "He handled the transition very smoothly, made deals with the black political leadership," comments *Philadelphia Inquirer* columnist Acel Moore. The city's mayors often have been at loggerheads with its council for institutional, not racial, reasons. Rendell courted Street, giving him an implicit veto on some initiatives.

That meant giving ground on privatization—keeping the new convention center under city management, for example, lest black jobs be lost. Yet Rendell privatized custodial services, prison health services and other functions, and says that similar initiatives will soon save $40 million. He insists that all whose jobs are privatized can be hired by other agencies or private contractors. But the contractors impose steep pay and benefit cuts, the point of privatization being to save money at workers' expense. And, as recent New York City scandals involving asbestos removal and parking ticket collections show, privatization can bring corruption and incompetence. Rendell counters that most city unions can avoid such troubles by changing their own work rules to improve productivity.

Rendell and Street also scaled back, by roughly $100 million, a fat trash collection contract negotiated by Goode. That meant weathering the feared strike. When union leaders cried that "an administration of white guys in suits" was beating up on black employees, the new mayor challenged black voters: "Do *you* get twenty paid sick days on your job? Do *you* get fourteen paid holidays?" The strike lasted less than a day after Rendell gave union leaders face-saving exits.

Philadelphia is still a city in decline. Its large public housing authority, which shelters 10 percent of the populace, is mired in patronage and corruption. Its industrial areas are in ruins. Its tax structure is a mess. But Rendell is at least candid about his city's options. Rainbow I mayors like Goode (and, notably, Dinkins) tend to live in denial, railing at Washington without seriously rethinking their own emphasis on rights and redistributive services. Rendell argues that mayors who want a new federal urban policy will have credibility "only if we come to Washington with clean hands."

Rendell is not the only Rainbow II trailblazer. In Cleveland, Michael White, a self-described street fighter from the city's tough East Side, combines an "attitude" toward powerful elites with a fierce determination to reinforce conservative social values in a distinctively black idiom. He ran for mayor in 1989 as a maverick state senator and won partly on a fluke: the two white candidates in the primary were so equally matched that

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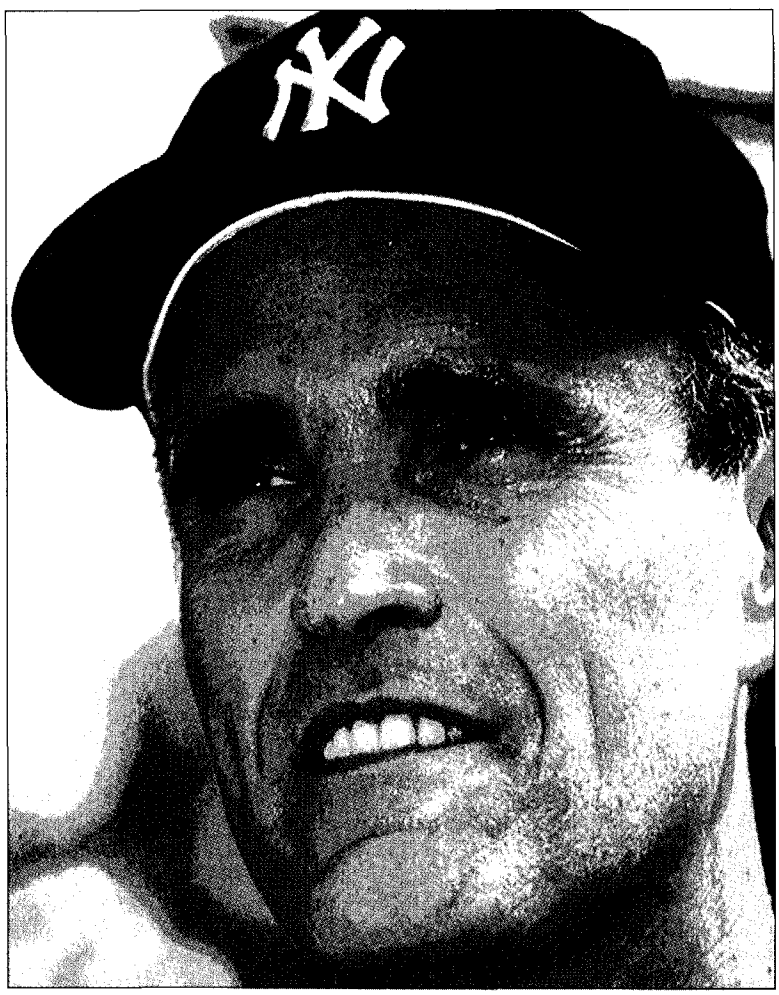
they canceled out each other, and White squeaked past them into a runoff with the most powerful black politician in town, City Council President George Forbes. For the first time, Cleveland's electorate, half black, half white, faced a choice between two blacks.

White had made the runoff partly on his own steam, too, with a forceful campaign against black crime, school busing and Forbes's penchant for playing the race card, which had enraged many whites. "White articulated a vision and said the same thing on both sides of town," says *Plain Dealer* columnist Brent Larkin. He argued that blacks who opposed busing didn't have to fear saying so just because whites opposed it, too. In an ugly runoff with Forbes, White won with 30 percent of the black vote and 90 percent of the white vote—an inauspicious beginning for a black mayor by Rainbow I standards, but one he soon turned to his advantage among blacks.



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RUDOLPH GIULIANI

Since the rocky reign of its first black mayor, Carl Stokes, in the late 1960s, Cleveland's population has dropped roughly 30 percent, to 505,000. Under a succession of white mayors, including ethnic populist Dennis Kucinich and corporate darling George Voinovich, Cleveland touted itself as a comeback city with a sleek new skyline and, not far off, a $365 million stadium for the Indians that will rival Baltimore's Camden Yards. But more than a third of Cleveland's population lives below the poverty line, and much of its East Side is an inner-city moonscape.

White has tackled some problems that his white predecessors avoided. Although he doesn't run the city's elected school board, he backed a winning, insurgent, biracial slate opposed to busing. He won give-backs, reduced overtime and one-cop patrol cars from city unions. He backed cops in crackhouse evictions and a controversial case involving the death in police custody of a drug-abusing black suspected of car theft.

White has been criticized by blacks and white liberals for these positions and for scolding Jesse Jackson at the 1992 Democratic National Convention in New York, when Jackson criticized Bill Clinton after his nomination was inevitable. White's obvious pride in being black has helped him on the East Side, but "he has consciously attempted not to be a 'black' mayor," Larkin says. "If anything, he makes a conscious effort to be a mayor who happens to be black." Civil rights leaders may not like that, but Cleveland's voters do.

As White's and Rendell's accomplishments mirror one another, Rainbow II moves to the center of urban politics from both sides of the racial divide. This is nowhere more clear than in New York, where a Dinkins defeat would mark the first time that a big city's first black mayor has ever lost a re-election bid. Such a defeat, especially amid the liberal fearmongering about racism and fascism now underway in New York, would be a telling repudiation of twenty years of misguided racial politics.

But a Giuliani victory would not settle the question of whether Rainbow II administrations can regenerate American cities as places where new products, ideas and people circulate freely across the lines of color and class. Full black participation in that exchange is what the early civil rights movement sought, and what more recent black attacks on the liberal civic culture have repelled. Can new mayors outflank or creatively redirect such assaults?

The challenge ought to be irresistible to Democrats, who bring to cities a sophistication at governing and a love of urbanity. But those who cling to Rainbow I social-welfare spending and identity politics will continue to default to Republican neophytes such as Los Angeles's Riordan, Jersey City's Schundler or, indeed, Giuliani. Only if Democrats follow the example of candidate Clinton, who spoke for those "who work hard and play by the rules," and who rebuffed that consummate Rainbow I phony, Sister Souljah, can they expect to win like Rendell and White. Only if Rainbow II succeeds will cities regain their promise and, not incidentally, nourish the occasional friendship where "one didn't know what the other was." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Transformations

Victor Nunez had a hard time raising the money to make **Ruby in Paradise** (October). I'm surprised that he raised it at all. In this age of film gimmick and blam and blast, here's a writer-director who wanted to make a picture simply because he was interested in some characters. It's a story whose outline has no novelty, but it's one that, unlike so many film stories, doesn't exist for the sake of its outline. It has people in it.

Ruby Lee Gissing, around 20, comes from Tennessee to Panama City, on the gulf in northern Florida, because she wants to break loose and find her life. She tells a new girlfriend that she got out of her hometown "without getting pregnant or getting beat up," and that it took some doing. Now she finds a sales job in a beachware shop run by the middle-aged Mrs. Chambers, who doesn't really need anyone but is taken by the girl's polite persistence.

Ruby is warned against Mrs. Chambers' good looking son, Ricky, but the warning doesn't help. Heavy involvement follows, from which she wrenches free because, as she says, she didn't come all the way from Tennessee just to be his "chippie." Soon she takes up with a quite different kind of man, Mike, who works in a plant nursery and who—as she confides to her diary in the voice-over that runs through the film—believes in "low-impact living." This affair is much more pleasant, yet complications follow.

She is fired, scratches around for a job and finally finds one in a laundry. Then Mrs. Chambers seeks her out and brings her back to the beach shop with the promise of a future. Ricky is contrite for past grossness; Mike is affectionately patient. But Ruby won't think of herself as having to choose between them. She wants, for a while anyway, to remain open to experience.

If this outline sounds banal, I've made Nunez's point. He doesn't want to sweep us away with twisty action: he wants us to react as if someone we knew were telling us about things that had actually happened to her. We wouldn't judge events in a friend's life on whether they would or wouldn't make a good film. He has written Ruby so gently, so comprehendingly, that she *exists*—in all her crystalline ordinariness. After Mike's first kiss, she writes in her diary, "It's a long time since I've had a kiss that made my lips hum." That's a disconcertingly simple confidence from a human being.

And Nunez has cast Ruby perfectly. Ashley Judd, related to well-known country singers, understands Ruby completely and understands, too, that film acting is more internal than otherwise. Her face has no particular distinction, but it's a clear medium, a transparency, through which we can see the scares and resolves and attractions and aversions that are whisking around in Ruby.

In fact, Nunez has cast the whole film perfectly, so much so that it's easy to overlook his skill. Allison Dean, Ruby's black friend in the beach shop, Felicia Hernandez, the laundry co-worker, Bentley Mitchum, the handsome, spoiled Ricky and Todd Field, the dependable Mike, fit so snugly in their roles that the high quality of their acting may be ignored. A special note for Dorothy Lyman, as Mrs. Chambers, a lovely and markedly competent actress whom we all ought to be seeing much more often.

Nunez's directing is exactly as unostentatious and clear as it ought to be. The picture would benefit by being about five or six minutes shorter; he is so concerned with Ruby that he finds it hard to let her go. He's also concerned with the place. He showed long ago, in *Gal Young 'Un*, that northern Florida is his turf. He is a self-described regionalist, and he wants to sing the problems and beauties of his region. Fine. It's a little early to equate him with Satyajit Ray, but what Ray did for Bengal, Nunez could try to do for his homeland. With his quiet art, he deserves every chance.

At the other end of several spectrums is **M. Butterfly** (Warner Bros.). It's based on the much-mulled play by David Henry Hwang, which he in turn based on a factual incident. Some years ago a French diplomat in Beijing had an affair with a Chinese singer to whom he revealed diplomatic secrets. Eventually the diplomat learned that the singer was a spy and was not a woman. The intercalations of sexual fantasy and racial mythology in the play were so thick that they made it difficult to delve into character. The figures in the story were

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dr. Bethune. *Donald Sutherland is striking as Norman Bethune, the politically radical Canadian physician who served in the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese revolution. The editing is a bit fuzzy, but Sutherland prevails. (Reviewed 8/3/93)* **Manhattan Murder Mystery.** *Woody Allen, the amateur actor, doesn't help his own script; still, there are laughs. The title tells all we need to know of the subject in advance. (10/4/93)* **Samba Traoré.** *Idrissa Ouédraogo once again spins a tale of Burkina Faso with taking simplicity. A villager who commits a crime in a city returns to his village, and the crime has its effects. (10/4/93)* **Wittgenstein.** *Expertly distilled biography, acutely directed, finely acted. Derek Jarman departs from his former lush directing style and gains real richness. (10/11/93)* **—SK**

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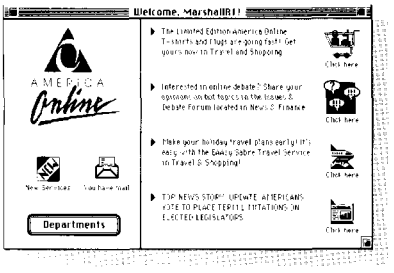

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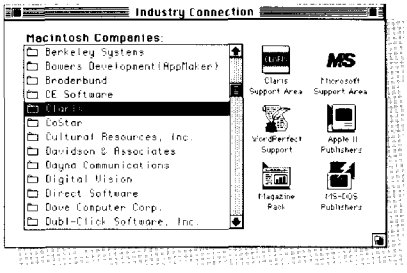

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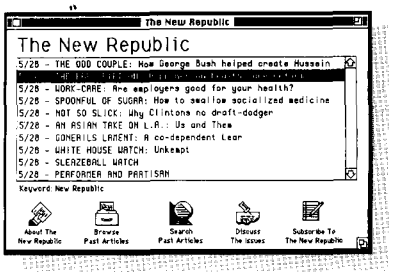
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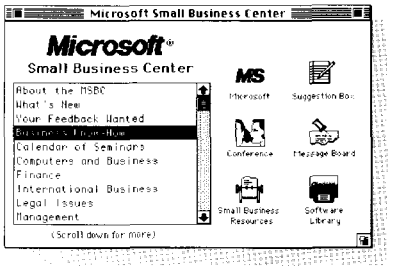

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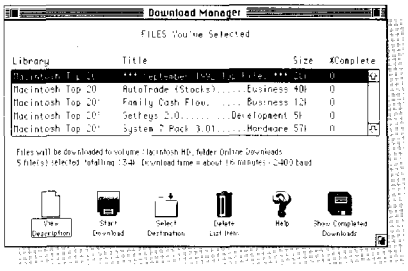

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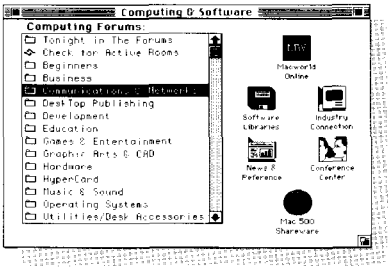

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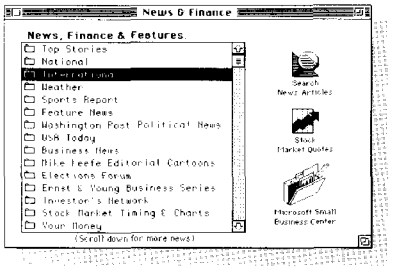

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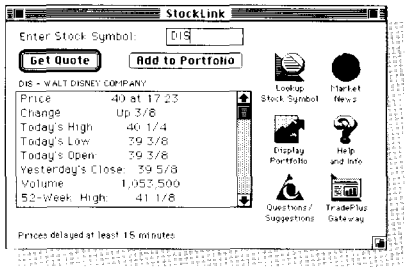

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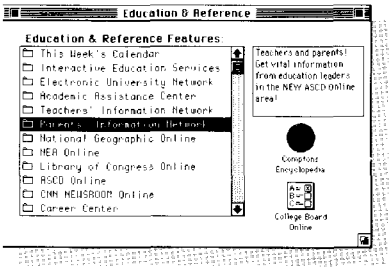

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almost bound to be figures—representatives of ideas.

Still, Hwang's play confronted its materials bravely and tried to find some poetry in the process: the Westerner conditioned by the Madame Butterfly trope, so enslaved by it that he didn't even recognize—through many years—that his lover was male, possibly even blinding himself with the trope so as not to acknowledge deeply buried homosexuality. (The Frenchman was married and also had heterosexual affairs.)

I thought that a good deal of the play's success came from its imaginative structure, not merely its flashbacks from the Frenchman's prison cell but—in scene and fragment and silhouette—an enterprising use of theatrical means. Those means were of course abandoned for the film even though Hwang did his own screenplay, even though the director, David Cronenberg, is renowned for his bizarrerie. (That bizarrerie is really mainstream, not like Derek Jarman's.) Result: the story, which in the theater flourished through its form, is now a straight narrative and is greatly diminished thereby, in grip and credibility. One can almost hear Hwang, who was one of the executive producers of the film, making concessions to the film-going public.

The film squirms under another disadvantage. On Broadway, the "female" was done exquisitely by B. D. Wong. On film the actor of the part is necessarily seen up close; John Lone always looks like a man in drag, which kills the ambiguities in the Frenchman's mind and makes some of the dialogue faintly risible. (The same sort of deception in *The Crying Game* was complete.)

Lone does his best, but he's bagged before he starts. Jeremy Irons, a true talent, pours intensity into the Frenchman, but it runs out at the other end of the porous role. (A scene that Hwang put into the film, between the pair in a police van on the way to prison, is like a revue-sketch version of the affair that precedes it.) Barbara Sukowa, the superb German actress familiar from Fassbinder and von Trotta films, is wasted—I would say debased—in the small role of Irons's wife.

Cronenberg's eerie touches don't get much chance here. What's left is quite unremarkable directing, trying hard to seem less so. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Hillbilly Blues

Robert Schenkkan's Pulitzer Prize-winning **The Kentucky Cycle**, now stopping at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater in Washington before it goes to Broadway, is in nine acts and two parts, consuming about six hours of playing time. Aside from any values it might have as a work of the imagination, *The Kentucky Cycle* is yet another sign that American dramatists are beginning to fashion their plays into protracted journeys at the very moment when audiences are apparently losing patience with sitting in the theater at all.

Marathon plays, of course, have been a commonplace of dramatic literature since *The Oresteia*. One thinks of Marlowe's two-part *Tamburlaine*, Goethe's two-part *Faust*, Ibsen's *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, Strindberg's trilogy *The Road to Damascus* and Shaw's "metabiological Pentateuch" *Back to Methuselah*, among others, all of which attempted to endow the drama with something approaching epic form. But until the last few years, there was little evidence that American dramatists had a similar appetite for theatrical giantism, apart from Eugene O'Neill, whose monumental works culminated in a projected nine-play cycle about American materialism.

O'Neill's cycle was left unfinished (*A Touch of the Poet* and an early draft of *More Stately Mansions* are the only surviving remnants), but there have recently been a number of American efforts to achieve O'Neillian scope, among them Preston Jones's *The Texas Trilogy*, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* and Robert Wilson's early large-scale extravaganzas (one of which took seven days to perform). Now comes *The Kentucky Cycle*, designed to be precisely what O'Neill originally envisioned—an epic study of American materialism as seen through the prism of family life.

Whatever one thinks of Schenkkan's achievement, one has to admire his nerve. *The Kentucky Cycle* is a construct of domestic plays endowed with the dimensions of a national saga. In the program, Schenkkan provides a genealogical chart to help us follow the extended progress of three different families tied to each other by marriage and hatred. Beginning with the Indian wars of 1775, the play ranges through 200 years of American life, touching on the Civil War, the unionization of coal miners in the 1920s, the compromises of the UMW in the 1950s and the aftermath of the Korean War in 1954, finally ending in 1975 with an epilogue devoted to tying up the strands of plot and theme. Although the references to recorded history are often muted, and the canvas is geographically narrow, it is clearly the author's intention to provide a general historical overview of this continent through the device of familial events.

Schenkkan's central theme is the despoliation of the American landscape by greed and rapine. There are virtually no heroes in this work, only plunderers and their victims. The one pure element, aside from a few black characters, is the land itself, and that is gradually reduced to mud and rubble. To reinforce this point, most of the action takes place in Howsen County, in the Cumberland district of eastern Kentucky, marked by a thick forest and a magnificent oak tree that serves as the central symbol. Neither the forest nor the oak survives the ravages of rapacious men. The property belongs to the Rowen family after its patriarch Michael procures it from the Cherokees in exchange for guns (though the Indians believe that "no one owns this land, it cannot be given"). It is entirely consistent with Rowen family behavior throughout the next 200 years that Michael also trades the Indians contaminated blankets that will infect most of the tribe with small pox.

Although Schenkkan's Indians are not exactly noble savages, they are contrasted with the white man in a manner clearly influenced by the racial assumptions of the movie *Dances with Wolves*. (There is even a howling wolf to begin and end the play.) "Here the savage was taught his lessons in perfidy by masters of the trade," reads the epigraph by Harry Caudill, whose *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* was the inspiration for Schenkkan's research. The Cherokees stick to their bargains; the settlers are invariably mean and treacherous. Treachery, in fact, is almost a leitmotif of the play, and its repeated reversal device is an offer of friendship followed by an abrupt and savage murder. Rowen even betrays his own wife, an Indian woman named Morning Star, first by cutting her tendon to prevent her departure, then by killing their infant daughter and finally by fathering a child on a slave girl he bought at an auction (thus initiating a related black family

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line). He is rewarded in kind when his half-breed son, Patrick, stabs him to death in a tub.

The only vaguely moral figure in this murderous family is Patrick's grandson, Jed, but even he is involved in a series of grisly actions. After the Talbert family, a rival clan though also related by blood, has reduced the Rowens to sharecroppers on their own property, the Rowens take delayed revenge by slaughtering all but the Talbert womenfolk. Jed joins Quantrill's raiders during the Civil War and participates in a scurvy ambush of Union soldiers.

After the war, Jed makes the mistake of selling mining rights to his recovered land for a dollar an acre, and Standard Oil, strip-mining for coal, creates a sulfurous scene of havoc and pillage that more than compensates for the sins of the family. The unionization of the coal miners is marked by similar acts of treachery. Mary Ann Rowen's husband, Tommy, characteristically betrays a friendly union agitator who is gunned down by the owners. When their son, Joshua, eventually becomes the president of the district union, he betrays his own local by compromising on safety standards. In the inevitable catastrophe, his own son is killed. The play ends with Joshua recovering a 200-year-old infant corpse, wrapped in buckskin, which happens to be the murdered baby daughter of his ancestor Michael.

As my synopsis might suggest, this remorseless depiction of the white settler's duplicity and meanness eventually grows tiring, even to a spectator with no particular illusions about the benevolence of human nature. Occasionally a character, usually a woman, will detach herself from the contemptible crowd to express a decent emotion. But for the most part, everyone acts like a survivalist, sacrificing friend and foe alike for the sake of personal gain. It's as if only Snopeses inhabited Yoknapatawpha County. There is no sentiment in this play, but, curiously, Schenkkan's endless parade of base-hearted men eventually becomes a reverse form of sentimentality. One leaves the theater persuaded of the human capacity for evil but also confirmed in one's own virtue.

Where the author excels is in his storytelling. Despite its length, the play is never boring, and despite its growing predictability, it is often engrossing. The scene in the first part called "Ties That Bind," in which Patrick Rowen is dispossessed of his land by a venal judge and a vengeful neighbor, is a subtle portrait of relentless retribution, as satisfying as a morality play. Even here, however, where a suspenseful plot carries the action forward, one wishes for language that

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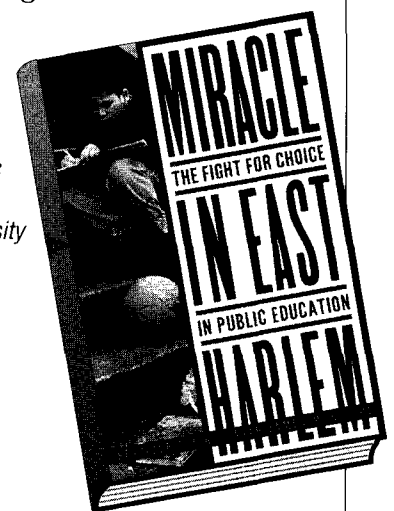

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would deepen it. Schenkkan's dialogue is never less than serviceable, and his hillbilly dialect usually sounds authentic. What is missing is the poetry that could plumb emotions beyond vengeance and hatred.

In short, for all its ambitions, *The Kentucky Cycle* rarely escapes melodrama, and its panoramic sweep suggests that it would be most comfortable as an epic film or a television miniseries. I don't say this patronizingly, only as a way of suggesting that its limitations might be better disguised by authentic locations and rural landscapes. Schenkkan's laudable desire to universalize his theme is often trivialized by domestic twosomes involved in table arguments. And the importance he attaches to the land as a central symbol is not reinforced very well by a set composed of wood platforms and steel pipes.

Given these limitations, Michael Olich's abstract scene design is very flexible, and Warner Shook's direction is a model of fluidity and economy. The twelve-member cast, supported by an eight-member chorus that acts as townfolk, scene changers and silent witnesses, transforms into a variety of characters with considerable authority. Stacy Keach, playing a medley of black-hearted Rowen characters, gives his most ferocious performance since Macbird. Jeanne Paulsen displays towering strength in a number of matriarchal roles. And Gregory Itzin, Randy Oglesby, John Aylward, Jacob (Tuck) Milligan and Ronald Hippe create a range of colorful Kentuckyans, making Howsen County seem a lot more populated than it really is.

So, with all my cavils, and with no small doubts about how it will fare in the commercial theater, I wish this epic well on its journey to New York. Evolved by a system of resident theaters, it is a testimony to the creative health that sometimes manages to flourish there, against all odds.

A brief word about Claudia Shear's one-woman show at the New York Theater Workshop, called **Blown Sideways Through Life**. The word is "Go." Looking like a mussed-up Bette Midler, Shear pours out stories about her life as an overweight bibliophile who got fired from sixty-four jobs, evacuating resentments ("I was always whining, I was always complaining, I'm so fat, I'm so poor") without a trace of self-pity. Her adventure as a phone girl in a whorehouse provides a very amusing story, and so do her accounts of her role in an Italian bordello movie and her twenty-eight days with Outward Bound ("To make duty in front of a dozen people?"). She is an original in a confessional form that already boasts some very gifted artists, including Eric Bogosian, Spalding Gray, Sandra Bernhard, Evan Handler and John Leguizamo. •

In Responsibilities Begin Dreams

BY ROBERT ALTER

The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Diana and Lionel Trilling by Diana Trilling

(Harcourt Brace, 442 pp., $24.95)

Diana Trilling has written—or more precisely and heroically, dictated, with failing eyesight, in her late 80s—a vivid, energetic and for the most part unflinching account of her upbringing and her husband's, of their marriage and of the first half of his career. Her narrative ends in 1950, the year in which *The Liberal Imagination* appeared, the collection of Lionel Trilling's essays that consolidated his reputation as one of the leading figures in American criticism. Afterward he would be locked by many minds into the figure known as "Trilling," the sober, judicious, exquisitely discriminating Anglophile critic whose success eventually elicited a backlash of devaluation. It became a widely held opinion that *The Liberal Imagination* was his supreme achievement, but considering that *Beyond Culture* (1965) and *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972) were still ahead of him, I think there is much to be said for Mrs. Trilling's judgment that the earlier book is "the introduction to a body of critical writing which becomes steadily richer in expression and implication as it moves beyond political-cultural immediacy."

A memoir of this sort serves two ends, which are not always distinct: it satisfies the somewhat prurient curiosity about the private lives of eminent people, and it illuminates the exemplary character of those same lives, the ways in which they are implicated in a particular historical moment and cultural setting. Mrs. Trilling's book, certainly, is a treasure trove of implication. *The Beginning of the Journey*—the title alludes to her husband's novel, *The Middle of the Journey*—has a great deal to offer in satisfying our curiosity about the private lives. Many of the revelations are instructive, and a few of them are startling. Mrs. Trilling also provides some keen observations on the political and cultural circumstances of the New York intellectuals in their heyday, and on the entry of the children of Jewish immigrants into academic and literary life.

Both Trillings were born in 1905, the children of immigrants from Eastern Europe: his father was from Bialystok, her father was from Warsaw (which was not exactly, in those years, what Mrs. Trilling calls "the Warsaw ghetto") and Yiddish was their common mother tongue. "Like Lionel but unlike most of the Jewish intellectuals of our generation," she writes, "I had the childhood of an American who happened to be a Jew, not that of a Jew who happened to be an American." Still, there was a difference; the home in which Lionel grew up was kosher, but somewhat casual about Jewish observance; Diana's family had no attachment whatever to Jewish tradition.

Both families were moderately affluent. His father made fur coats (not a shadow of the sweatshop here), hers became a successful small-scale manufacturer. And both families, as Mrs. Trilling makes graphically clear, were spectacularly pathogenic in their treatment of their gifted offspring, who were destined to struggle with acute emotional difficulties throughout their lives. These were strict and grudging parents. When both fathers lost their money early in the Depression, and Lionel had to undertake their support on his paltry instructor's salary, he was never accorded the slightest gesture of gratitude.

This book is the story of two successful careers made, each in its way, in the great literary and political disputations of the time, but it is also a sad story. Mrs. Trilling valiantly and precisely describes the phobias that incapacitated her for years, and gives a harrowing account of her decades-long journey through seven psychoanalysts, at least three of whom proved to be extravagant

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malpractitioners. (One, the eminent theorist Ruth Brunswick, was a morphine addict who would nod off during sessions.) Lionel also spent many years in analysis, continuing intermittently until very late in his life, though it is curious that this authority on Freud never had much faith in Freudianism as a therapeutic process, deeming it instead, as he would stress in his essays, a compelling vision of life.

Those of us who knew Lionel Trilling as a teacher saw him as a poised, controlled and cordial man, vaguely aloof and supremely intelligent. It now emerges that he suffered from recurrent bouts of depression, and also had something of a drinking problem that aggravated his moroseness. Both of these difficulties he managed to conceal from his colleagues and his friends. During his depressions, which Mrs. Trilling says occurred five or six times a year, he would subject her to vehement verbal abuse, blaming all his unhappiness on her. They also sustained each other in many ways. She loyally supported him in his career, even helped him with writing problems in his first book, and he eventually encouraged her to write criticism. The relationship, however, was far from an easy one. From Mrs. Trilling's account, it sounds as though it must have been rather like Roberto Calasso's characterization of the bond between Odysseus and Penelope, in his extraordinary book, *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*: "More than the complicity of the flesh, they shared the complicity of intelligence. But intelligence is isolated and distrustful: thus, before recognizing each other, they clashed."

The saddest part of this sad story is the joylessness of their shared undertaking in life. Mrs. Trilling does report a couple of private indulgences in high jinx by her husband, but on the whole the Trillings do not appear to have been a couple with a highly developed sense of fun. At one point she observes that happiness had little place in her husband's scale of values: not happiness, but "seriousness was the desirable condition of man, especially a literary man." What followed was a sense of life as strenuous (one of Trilling's favorite compliments as a critic) and sober intellectual effort, much like what Freud had in mind when he spoke of the renunciation of instinctual gratification.

The trouble was that Trilling, on his wife's testimony, was profoundly divided in his attempt to live out this joyless, mentally heroic ethos. Perhaps the renunciation of happiness was really the expression of an inner inadequacy to meet life's risks and challenges. "For more than a decade," Mrs. Trilling remarks tellingly, with specific reference to their long postponement of parenthood, "Lionel and I squandered life not in pleasure but in fearfulness. We were afraid to be fully grown up and to be in command of ourselves and others, even children."

Fearfulness is a central theme in this book, in Mrs. Trilling's view of herself and her shared life with her husband. She begins by identifying it as a general feature of the cultural moment that defined their childhood:

> I grew up in a fear culture. Here are some of the things of which I and the grown-ups around me were afraid: lightning, thunder, wind, heavy snow, driving in cars, horses, snakes, worms, germs, poisonous plants and berries, electrical appliances, gas and gas fixtures, fire, cows, bulls, all boats including rowboats, swamps, quicksand, flies, mosquitos, bees, Greek ice cream parlors, bats, mold, rust, gangrene, spiders, caterpillars...

It is no wonder that the Trillings never left the country—indeed, scarcely traveled beyond greater New York and lower New England—until they were in their 50s. It is also understandable that Mrs. Trilling should wonder whether their unwillingness to seize the day was not so much an ethical calculation as a reflex of fear. One of the rewards of Mrs. Trilling's resolute self-scrutiny in her memoir is her skill at identifying the psychological grounds of moral stances without reducing morality to psychology.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The other disturbing shadow cast on Trilling's life by the ethos of seriousness is that he appears to have felt very often that it deflected him from his true vocation. He suffered intermittently from severe writer's block because, I would venture to say, criticism and scholarship were not really what he wanted to be doing. In an entry in his journal in 1951, published posthumously in *Partisan Review*, he wrote of his "ever-growing dislike of teaching and of the systematic study of literature." From the published excerpts of his journal, and now from the testimony of his wife, it is clear that he often felt uncomfortable with his role in the professoriate and was at times dismissive of mere criticism. Mrs. Trilling notes "the feeling of failure which shadowed Lionel's life even at its most successful."

The origin of this sense of failure, according to her plausible account, was his sense of having given up the possibility of a world of sensuality, freedom and imaginative adventure for the meager gratifications of purely cerebral work. I am not sure whether these are

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ineluctable alternatives, but Mrs. Trilling argues that they were felt to be so by her husband, and with her own Freudian orientation, and her keen interest in D. H. Lawrence, she seems to concur in this view. Had Lionel not been so repressed, she contends, he might have been able to realize his true dream, which was to be a novelist. And this notion leads her to her most extravagant, and most bizarrely touching, observation: "I could have wished him to have a thousand mistresses were this to have released him from the constraints upon him as a writer of fiction. I would willingly have been his female Leporello and sung his conquests."

The accuracy of this narrative of the Trillings' intimate life together, and of Lionel's struggles with himself, can be judged only on grounds of plausibility, and to me it sounds quite persuasive. Mrs. Trilling's courage in confronting her own failings, and his, makes much of the book very moving. The accuracy of her narrative of the New York milieu from the '20s through the '40s, however, can be measured against other evidence. In regard to these larger cultural and political considerations, Mrs. Trilling's account is often instructive, sometimes scathingly revealing, but at certain points it is, I think, open to question.

Mrs. Trilling's sundry portraits of the New York intellectuals involve in certain instances the expression of long-harbored resentments, and of defensiveness toward Trilling's detractors. This is inevitable, perhaps even appropriate, in such a memoir, and I do not detect any serious distortions. The crudeness and the malice of Philip Rahv (who is treated with particular hostility), the childlike extravagance of Dwight Macdonald, the critically aggressive manner of Elliot Cohen: all these judgments are at least approximately confirmed by the testimony of others who had dealings with these men. (Elliot Cohen by now is nearly forgotten. Almost a decade older than Trilling, he edited the young writer's first pieces in the *Menorah Journal.* A keen mind and a domineering personality, he suffered a chronic inability to write and was destined to conduct his intellectual life through the writing of others, which he insistently edited, most significantly at *Commentary*, of which he was the founding editor.)

Mrs. Trilling skillfully evokes the feeling of ferment among this group of writers, who appeared on the scene in the '20s and brought to bear, as she notes, "a new kind of critical attention to the arts and society which appeared to be indigenous, without nameable antecedent." As the country plunged into the Depression, they typically viewed society through a Marxist lens. Mrs. Trilling makes the reader understand the leftward turn of the intellectuals in the early '30s, including herself and her husband. Rather remarkably, the Trillings were enlisted in the Communist cause by Sidney Hook—soon to become one of Stalinism's most trenchant adversaries—during a summer at the Yaddo Institute in 1930. In mid-1932 the Trillings became actively involved, together with Elliot Cohen, in a Communist front organization called the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners. By the following spring, however, rudely disillusioned by the cynical exploitation of the Scottsboro case by the Communist Party, the Trillings resigned, and then moved in quick and firm stages from left-wing anti-Stalinism to a general opposition to communism as democratic liberals.

This sharp break with international communism after three years of commitment offers Mrs. Trilling a shrewd perspective on the political follies of the intellectuals; but it also leads her to some exaggerated or improbable notions. What she says of Dwight Macdonald could easily be extended to most of these New York writers: they were astute judges of literature and the arts, and they were wildly undependable about the political world. Nothing could illustrate more vividly how some of the smartest people in the country could come to inhabit a political and ideological cuckooland than the editorial statement published in *Partisan Review* after the fall of France and signed by many of the leading intellectuals of the day. Mrs. Trilling quotes it at length. There is no difference, the writers affirmed, between democratic capitalism and fascism; they opposed American involvement in the war, confidently proclaiming that "Our entry into the war, under the slogan of 'Stop Hitler!' would actually result in the immediate introduction of totalitarianism over here." So much for the political wisdom of Philip Rahv, William Phillips, John Dewey, Meyer Shapiro, William Carlos Williams, Clement Greenberg and other luminaries.

These were, of course, anti-Stalinist Marxists. Mrs. Trilling is also right to remind us of the extensive influence of Stalinism proper in American cultural life in the years before World War II, and she herself played a vigorous role in the battle against that influence. Still, the unqualified dominance that she attributes to the Communist Party in her memoir seems overstated: "In art, journalism, editing and publishing, in the theater and the entertainment industries, in the legal profession, in the schools and universities, among church and civic leaders, everywhere in our cultural life the Soviet Union exercised a control which was all but absolute." For each of these areas, a swarm of contradictory instances could be cited, not the least of which is *Partisan Review* itself.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Trilling's vision of an almost totally successful Communist conspiracy in American culture encourages her to explain some of the frustrations of her husband's career in flatly political terms. A case in point is his relationship with his publisher, the Viking Press. When *The Middle of the Journey* appeared in 1947, Trilling apparently harbored some hopes that the novel would become a best-seller. Surely this was quixotic: this somber, quietly perceptive novel about intellectuals caught in the undertow of communism was cut out to be a *succès d'estime,* which it was. Trilling's expectation after the Hiss-Chambers case broke in 1949 that Viking would "revive" the book (one of the novel's protagonists was based on Chambers) was unrealistic, since publishers very rarely expend effort on titles that have subsided to the backlist. Much later, in 1964, Trilling requested an advance from Marshall Best, who had become his editor at Viking, and was rebuffed. He replied with an angry and defensive letter, complaining of the "truly humiliating tone" in which Best had presumed to address him. For all this Mrs. Trilling has a simple explanation. She discovered in 1964 that Ben Huebsch, Best's superior at Viking, was "an ardent longtime Communist." (No dates are specified.) Whether Best was also tainted with the red brush is unclear to her, though she seems to think it a distinct possibility.

Viking's "demeaning" mistreatment of her husband, then, and its determination to bury his political novel, were direct responses to his staunch anti-communism. But the improbability of such an explanation is evident. If the house were really in thrall to the Stalinists, why would it have published *The Middle of the Journey* at all? The fact of the matter, as they learn from hard experience, is that highbrow writers do not make money for big trade presses, and this directly affects what publishers are prepared to do for them. Commercial cynicism, not political conspiracy, seems to me a perfectly adequate explanation of Trilling's rebuff by Viking. To be sure, in other aspects of his career,

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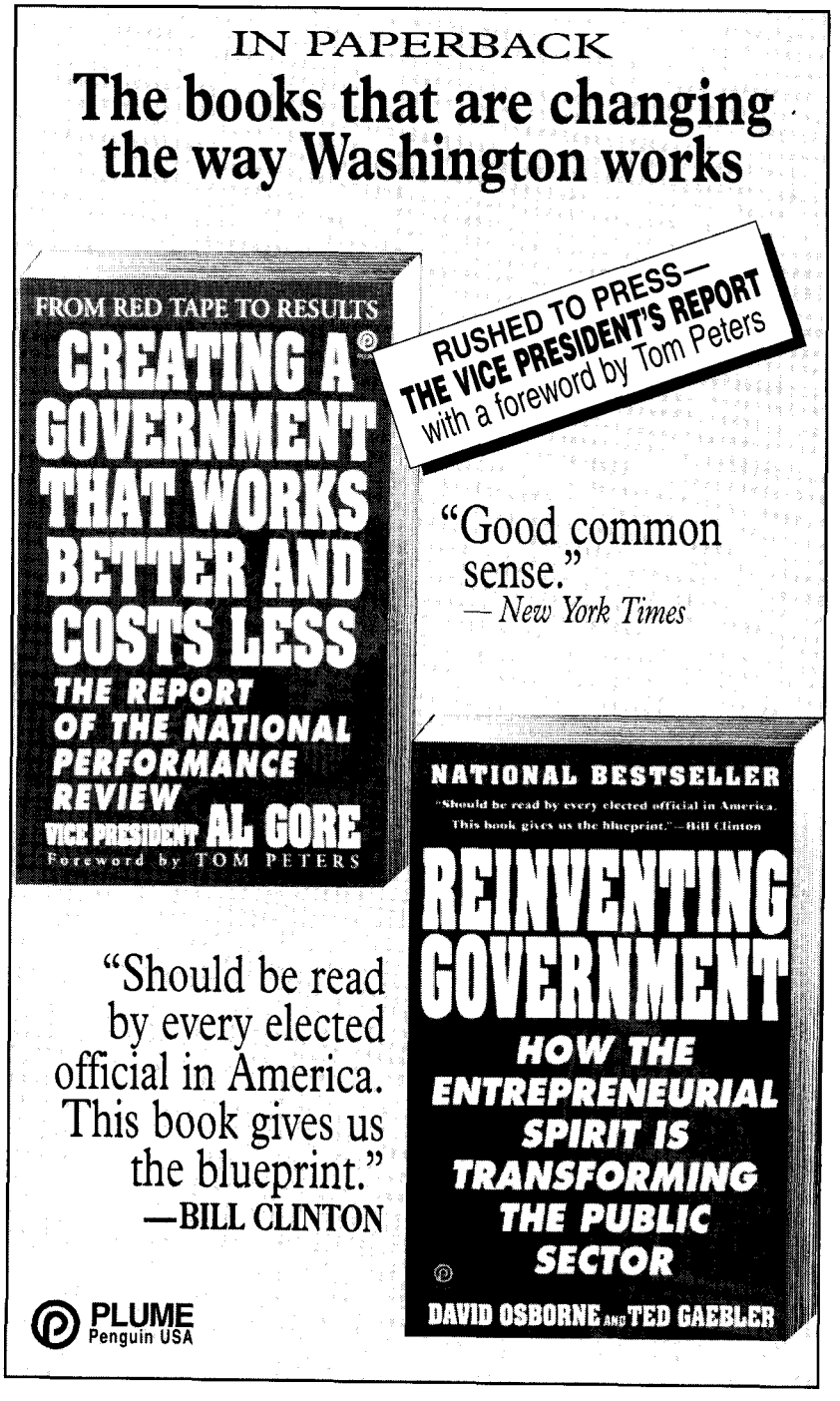
there were those who denigrated Trilling because they found him insufficiently radical; but the idea that the vicissitudes of his reputation are owed largely to a Marxist underground (or overground) does not seem right.

The other cultural context about which Mrs. Trilling's account is not altogether convincing is Jewishness, specifically the Jewishness of Lionel Trilling and the response that others had to him as a Jew. I sympathize with her firm objection to all those over the years who imposed on Trilling a particular set of expectations of how he ought to have been as a Jew. These are matters that everyone has to work out for himself; and there are indications that Lionel and Diana worked them out rather differently, even coming to heated arguments on the issue of Jewish affiliation, at least in the early years.

In her case, Jewishness seems to have been strictly a matter of background, never to be disavowed, but exerting no more than a genealogical influence on identity. And this is the construal of Jewishness that she tries to project onto him. His first stories and essays, written in his early 20s, were published in the *Menorah Journal*, originally the organ of a national organization of Jewish students, and a kind of predecessor of *Commentary*. The preoccupation of these fledgling pieces with Jewish questions—they express ambivalences rather than affirmations—is attributed by Mrs. Trilling to a young writer's willingness to provide what the market required so long as he could obtain a channel of publication. Even the evidence of a private journal entry in 1928, in which he wrote that "being a Jew is like walking in the wind or swimming: you are touched at all points and conscious everywhere," is read out of court as the momentary self-delusion of a young man under the "entrapping" influence of the *Menorah Journal*.

Mrs. Trilling hints that her husband eventually grew away from what she sees as an illusory sense of Jewish attachment, chiefly associated with his debut as a writer. My own guess is that the troubled ambivalence of an early story like "A Jewish Friend of Byron" (unmentioned in this memoir) continued in other forms throughout his later years. It is true that Trilling did succeed in becoming the perfectly cultivated English department Jew, a man of merely vestigial Jewish antecedents who could on occasion speak of the sterility or the claustral restrictiveness of all Jewish culture. In the 1950s, however, at the peak of his prestige as a critic, Trilling wrote with beautiful perceptiveness about Isaac Babel caught between two identities, and produced the eccentric but intriguing essay "Wordsworth and the Rabbis"; and after the Six-Day War he was willing to have his name appear on the letterhead of the pro-Israel American Professors for Peace in the Middle East.

A number of years ago, Mrs. Trilling published in *Commentary* a memorable account of how her husband was promoted to tenure at Columbia by the absolute fiat of Nicholas Murray Butler, the autocratic president of the university, who had been impressed by the young instructor's book on Matthew Arnold. She quotes from that essay here, but devotes more attention to a nearly traumatic episode that occurred three years earlier, in the spring of 1936, when the chairman of the English department sought to dismiss Trilling, informing him that "as a Jew, a Marxist and a Freudian" he could not be happy at Columbia. It is extremely interesting to learn that this threatened firing proved to be a pivotal moment in Trilling's life. It galvanized him into a new assertiveness in defense of his worth as a scholar and as a teacher in place of the submissiveness that evidently had elicited the disdain of his senior colleagues.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And yet Mrs. Trilling takes pains to minimize the role of anti-Semitism in the attempted ejection of the only Jew in the department. There were, she argues, all sorts of other considerations: his Marxism, his Freudianism, his evident unhappiness, his "sociological" approach to literary texts, his style of social intercourse with various members of the department, as well as unsubstantiated questions about his power as a teacher. But this line of argument flies in the face of what is generally known about departments of English in the first half of this century, and it is also contradicted by evidence that Mrs. Trilling herself provides. The issue deserves scrutiny because it is paramount to Trilling's career, to his achievement and to his gnawing sense of dissatisfaction with himself.

One must remember that the faculties of American universities were decidedly inhospitable to scholars of Jewish origin until well into the 1950s, and that departments of English were the most notorious bastions of this genteel anti-Semitism, perhaps because they fostered a certain vocational identification with the attitudes of British culture, from Anglican restraint to enthusiasm for the beauties of the Lake Country. A quarter of a century before the attempt to fire Lionel Trilling, the young Ludwig Lewissohn, on completing his doctorate in English at Columbia, was advised by his dissertation director that as a Jew he could never hope to find a position in English and that he should, with his native German, seek employment in a department of German, a course of action that he proceeded to follow.

The code words for the idea that Jews had no place in the precincts of academic gentility were that they did not "fit," were not "socially suited" and would be "unhappy" in the academic realm. Which is to say, when Harrison Ross Steeves, Trilling's chairman, presumed to judge that the young man was "unhappy," he was already invoking a code word. "Jew" is the first of the three terms that he chose to characterize Trilling's inappropriateness for the department; but of course the other two, "Marxist" and "Freudian," were both stereotypical associations with "Jew." By 1936, anyway, Trilling's connection with Marxism was receding into critical opposition, and he had not yet written a word on Freud.

The most telling revelation of the role of anti-Semitism in Columbia's attempt to get rid of Trilling is the striking epilogue to the affair that Mrs. Trilling reports (in rather more detail in her *Commentary* article than in her book). Three years after the aborted firing, when Butler's ukase to tenure Trilling was already an accomplished fact, the Trillings received an unprecedented visit to their apartment from Emery E. Neff, a senior colleague, who had directed Trilling's dissertation. Neff assured the younger man that he was glad to have him aboard, but he did want Lionel and Diana to understand that he hoped Lionel would not try to use his presence in the department as a wedge with which to introduce into the department others of his own race. Neff emphasized that he was speaking only for himself, but it is hard to imagine that he would have taken this extraordinary initiative were he not bolstered by some sense that his own prejudice reflected a prevailing assumption about the character of the department. And it would not have been possible for him to speak to Trilling in this way had he not felt him to be the right kind of Jew—finely intelligent, free of all immigrant mannerisms and even, as Mrs. Trilling notes, good-looking and the bearer of an English-sounding family name.

With the passage of the years, the English department at Columbia occasionally appointed a Jew to an instructorship, but it is worth noting that for more than two decades Trilling remained the only Jew who was a member of its tenured staff. I linger over this episode because it suggests, even more than Mrs. Trilling is prepared to admit, the steep emotional price of entry paid by this son of Jewish immigrants to become part of a world that was accustomed to defining people of his background as alien. The chronic sense of dissatisfaction with himself, that chafing frustration which his wife reports, no doubt had deep roots in his childhood, as she assumes, but I suspect that there is also a representative sociological dimension to his unease with his life. He was someone who underwent, in John Cuddihy's phrase, an "ordeal of civility."

I am not in the least suggesting that the refinement and the restraint of his manner and his prose were alien to his nature; or that these qualities do not go with an honorable Jewishness. Trilling's temperament seems to have suited him perfectly to the sensibility of a gentleman, prepared him exquisitely to be a sympathetic expositor of Arnold, Austen and Wordsworth—but not, say, of a wild man like Dostoyevsky, whom he privately admired. Even so, the revelations of his wife's memoir and of the published excerpts from his journal document what amounts to a sense of onerous duty, a relentless self-vigilance, a fear of the false step.

On the evidence of *The Beginning of the Journey*, both he and his wife were in the habit of using the term "humiliating" for situations that others might deem only frustrating or provoking—a job in the evening extension program at Hunter College, working with the editors of the *Menorah Journal*, a conflict with his publisher. Perhaps this was the name of his deepest fear: to have his dignity challenged, his sense of status mocked or flatly ignored. The shadowy counter-image of his English department civility is his fantasy wish, recorded by his wife, that he might have been like the drunken, swaggering Hemingway, freed from inhibition to be an imaginative writer. It is true that a later generation of American Jewish writers—Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Philip Roth—did escape the vise of civility. And yet one might argue—I suspect that Lionel Trilling would have argued—that the freedom from inhibition in the work of these writers was purchased at a high price, that their work, in the interest of casting off the false restraints of propriety, too easily descends into real indignity and embarrassing self-exposure, a flaunting of personal pain that seems more the compulsive record of unhealed wounds than the expression of a genuine liberation.

Diana Trilling, in her own distinctive way, participated in this intermittent impulse to flee the ethic of sobriety to an imagined horizon of freedom from inhibition. In 1941, after having spent the first decade and a half of her married life mainly struggling to overcome her punishing phobias, she began, with her husband's encouragement, to review fiction for *The Nation*, where she was an anti-Communist counterweight at "the back of the book" to the Stalinism of the front of the journal. The miscellaneous nature of a reviewer's fare gave her the opportunity to range widely. By stages, she moved to writing for women's magazines, where she did not have the political role she played at *The Nation*; and then went on to intellectual journals like *Partisan Review* and *Commentary*. When she began to produce substantial essays, often with a strong autobiographical cast, toward the end of the '50s, it is noteworthy that she should have been attracted to two eminently Dionysian writers: Allen Ginsberg, once her husband's student, and D.H. Lawrence. Her intense interest in Lawrence also may have been a sign of

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her overcoming as a mature critic all those childhood fears of horses, bugs, snakes, lightning, thunder and (one thinks of the ending of *Women in Love*) heavy snow.

There was gain as well as pain in Lionel Trilling's assumption of the burden of civility. An outsider who did brilliantly inside, the critic was able to exercise a finely balanced biopic vision of the objects of his inquiry, beautifully identifying with them and yet also seeing them in their surprising otherness. That balance contributed a good deal to the illuminations that he provided on the English romantics, the nineteenth-century novel, the cultural assimilation of the modernists and the relation between literature and politics. In an entry in his journal in 1936, he proposed the following project:

> An essay on the "ambivalent moments"—those moments in our reading when we neither hate nor love what the author is saying but hate and love together: when our mind is poised over a recognition of a truth which attacks other truths, or when the author has brilliantly caught half the truth, and denies the other half. These are the most fertile moments. They are the moments of the critic:
>
> Santayana, Arnold, Carlyle: Nietzsche, etc.

He never wrote that essay; but nearly everything he did for the next four decades, down to the piece on Jane Austen that he was trying to finish when he died in 1975, manifested the advantages of perception afforded by ambivalent or overdetermined moments. To see well, a critic above all must be intelligent; but intelligence lends itself to spectacular abuse. A balance of sympathy and judgment, an ability to negotiate between closeness and distance, is often crucially important. That balance was more delicately managed by Trilling than by any of the other New York critics; but many of them shared at least something of this intense critical deployment of hate and love together, and for many of them, also the children of Jewish immigrants moving out of one world and into another, that peculiar, alloyed energy may have been connected with the agitation of cultural transition.

And yet there is more to Trilling's critical power than discrimination, or the fine balancing of opposing claims. It is Mrs. Trilling's aim in her portrait to complicate his reputation and to define his power more precisely by tearing away the facade of gentility and revealing his violent impulses, his hidden sympathies with the forces of unreason and unrule. Some of these revelations are remarkable. And yet Trilling did not hide his fascination with darkness completely. A careful reading of his own work would itself suffice to explode the stereotype of the too-circumspect critic and the too-exquisite man. It is true that he wrote a sober and modulated prose that was rare in its time (and in ours). But the objective of that style was to take its readers to the dark places of the psyche and of history, to the trouble spots that are skirted by the conventional formulas of academic discourse. Trilling suffered too much in believing that he needed to write stories or novels, to be Hemingway or Lawrence, to probe the depths. In his essays, he probed deeply.

His forceful essay of 1961, "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," which he set at the head of *Beyond Culture*, is exemplary in this regard. His questioning of his own academic enterprise really was (to use the fashionable term) transgressive. What happens, he asked, when the impulse to peer into the abyss and to challenge radically the assumptions of prevailing culture, which animated much of modern literature, is embraced by the academic establishment, and routinized for students, by professors, conformist or otherwise? Such a fundamental question would not have occurred to a man who did not open himself to what was morally disturbing, and perhaps also perilously lib-

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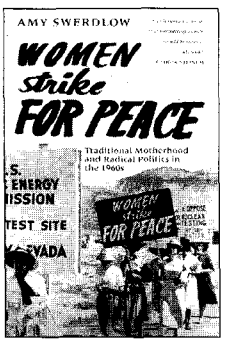

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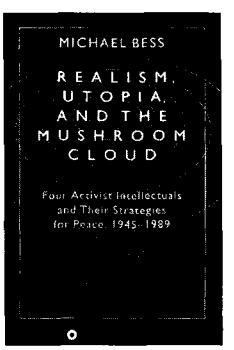
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erating, in modern literature.

So there was, in his work, and as his wife now shows, in his life, something much deeper than sensibility. Thus, he reflects on the unavailability of the tragic mode to modern writers:

> ... if we ask why it has come about, one reason may be that we have learned to think our way back through tragedy to the primal stuff out of which tragedy arose. If we consider the primitive forbidden ways of conduct which traditionally in tragedy lead to punishment by death, we think of them as being the path to reality and truth, to an ultimate self-realization. We have always wondered if tragedy itself may not have been saying just this in a deeply hidden way, drawing us to think of the hero's sin and death as somehow conferring justification, even salvation of a sort—no doubt this is what Nietzsche had in mind when he said that "tragedy denies ethics."

Observations like this, which reflect the distinctive strength of Trilling's criticism, have the authority of unflinching introspection. They are much more than the soft currency of academic intercourse.

Diana Trilling concludes her remarkable memoir with a poignant lament over the passing of the New York intellectuals, whom she characterizes unsentimentally as "the strange difficult ungenerous unreliable unkind and not always honest people who created the world in which Lionel and I shared." What they lacked in moral virtue they made up for in intellectual avidity, in their ardent commitment to understanding the complex interactions of culture, society and politics. Most of these critics, at least until after World War II, were, unlike Trilling himself, not academics. Mrs. Trilling regrets the assimilation of intellectual life to the academy, which, she contends, has led to giving up on "the life of significant contention" and to settling instead "for the life of expertise."

This, I think, is only partly right. We would be at least a little better off if academia were indeed peopled by dutiful specialists in Melville and Meredith. But the ideal of learned expertise is itself in retreat. It has been usurped by a crusading impetus that reduces history, literature and the other humanities to tendentious prooftexts for political agendas that have little resonance outside the academy. Intellectuals on the contemporary campus lead a life of contention, but it can scarcely be called significant contention. Something precious *has* vanished. Philip Rahv, Dwight Macdonald, Sidney Hook, Malcolm Cowley and the others whom Mrs. Trilling includes in the roll call of her final paragraph may have committed to print ideas that were extravagant, wrong-headed, perverse or silly, but they also provided invigorating instances of the adventure of mind reflecting on culture and tracing the ligaments between art and life.

It is hard to assess whether, as Mrs. Trilling imagines, their critical activity created a "weight ... against the popular culture" which we now lack. At the very least, for that minority of Americans deeply responsive to serious culture, the Trillings and their contentious colleagues showed how much critical reflection adds to culture, how much it helps adjudicate the claims of love and hate. Nobody performed this service to the culture with more subtlety than Lionel Trilling. We now know that he performed it at great inner cost, with the harrowings of self-doubt and divided purpose. And yet his life was, for all its sadness, also an exemplary life. His long and painful quarrel with himself may have been a principal source of his moral and intellectual power.

ROBERT ALTER is the author, among other books, of *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (Simon & Schuster) and *The World of Biblical Literature* (Basic).

Boundaries of Pain

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

Liberal Nationalism by Yael Tamir

(Princeton University Press, 194 pp., $24.95)

Nowadays liberal nationalism sounds like a contradiction in terms. Not so in the middle of the nineteenth century, when nationalism was the great liberal cause, and anyone who championed the emancipation of women, the franchisement of workers and the diffusion of commercial civilization also supported the liberation of captive peoples from the yoke of empire. Byron died to free the Greeks from the Turks; Chopin championed Polish independence; Mazzini and Cavour fought to liberate Italy from the Austrians. These were the liberal heroes of the age, and they were liberals first, nationalists second. If liberal and nationalist values conflicted, Mazzini insisted, a liberal's obligations were clear:

> You must ask yourself whenever you do an action in the sphere of your country ... if what I am doing were done by all and for all, would it advantage or injure humanity? And if your conscience answers, it would injure humanity, desist.

Pious and innocent words these turned out to be. For we know what happened when, in 1914, Europeans actually had to choose between liberal principles and nationalist emotions.

Nationalism revived as a liberal cause, however, in the 1940s and 1950s, when Western liberals supported the struggles of African and Asian colonial peoples to win nation-states of their own. Given the generally (if not quite universally) depressing results of decolonization, contemporary liberals are more likely to be heard murmuring nostalgically about the benefits of Western empire than clinging to the still valid idea that people have a right to be ruled by their own bastards rather than by someone else's. As this century staggers to its balkanized end, it is harder than ever to believe, with Mazzini, that liberal principle can be reconciled with nationalism, or that national liberation can ever have liberal results. It is against this brutal historical background that one begins to appreciate the daring of Yael Tamir's enterprise.

Showing that a liberal can be a good nationalist is not the same thing as showing that a liberal can be a good patriot. Liberals are frequently accused of being unpatriotic, and while such accusations may be troubling in practice, they are untroubling in principle. Conservative boneheads notwithstanding, there is no contradiction between loving one's country and loathing its faults; shame, as Isaiah Berlin once remarked, is an eminently patriotic emotion. Tamir rightly insists that national pride is not necessarily a thoughtless, instinctual emotion. We can give good grounds for loving our country, she says, and we can love it in an open-eyed and disabused manner, consistent with the liberal commitment to reason and reflection.

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Still, if all that Tamir was attempting to show is that a liberal can be a good patriot, the exercise would be platitudinous. It is obvious that love cannot excuse injustice; and obvious, too, that in a conflict between love and injustice, liberals should stick to their liberal principles. In any more or less decent liberal society, moreover, they are allowed to do so. Squaring liberalism and nationalism, by contrast, is much harder. And that is Tamir's ambition.

The central distinction between patriotism and nationalism is that patriotism expresses devotion to a nation-state that is already established, while nationalism asserts a commitment to a nation that does not yet have a state of its own, or whose political legitimacy is contested by another nation. To be a nationalist is to defend one's national right against a competing right. Thus, when two peoples compete for the same piece of territory, which is usually the circumstance in which nationalism develops, liberals have the dilemma of reconciling their own claim against someone else's, without violating their commitment to universal values. This is the nub of the difficulty.

It is important to note that this book, by an Oxford-trained political philosopher, is not merely an academic exercise. Its attempt to reconcile liberalism and nationalism is not just another professor's attempt to marry communitarianism and individualism within the context of the ongoing liberal debate over whether the liberal self is a Rawlsian free agent or a social being "embedded" in tradition and community. Tamir does weigh in with an interesting argument on the communitarian side: democratic allegiance in a liberal polity, she argues, is dependent on something deeper than the rational calculus of advantage, interest and consent; individuals need to believe that their state is the expressive embodiment of a nation's particular culture, heritage and history. But such a claim could have been made, again, by any well-meaning, tenured American communitarian. Tamir is not that. She is an Israeli who was one of the founders of Peace Now, and has for years been politically active on behalf of civil rights in Israel.

Her book is not only an intervention in the academic Anglo-American debate about liberalism, it is also, at a deeper and more affecting level, a Zionist's *examen de conscience*. This interplay between Oxford and Jerusalem makes it a deeply interesting work. It brought home to me that it is one thing to reason from liberal principles in a state whose legitimacy is unchallenged, and quite another to do so in a state whose existence is constantly in question. The notion that individuals make their choices alone, in isolation from the community, could occur only to someone who can take the enabling context of a secure nation-state entirely for granted. When reasoning within a community whose very legitimacy is under challenge, however, it will seem obvious that political choice is "embedded" in the reality of that community's national traditions and dilemmas.

How, then, does Tamir reconcile liberalism and Zionism? She follows Mazzini in believing that all nationalist claims must be consistent with universal values. This has the important corollary that the Jewish claim to the state of Israel cannot be grounded in the particular facts of Jewish suffering. More generally, she claims, "suffering and persecution are not suitable grounds for bestowing national rights." Many groups—religious sects, women, homosexuals, racial groups, aboriginal peoples—have suffered; and while this may entitle them to compensation, it does not necessarily entitle them to national rights. Moreover, Tamir goes on interestingly, "It would be unreasonable to claim that national groups that have never suffered persecution are therefore less entitled to national rights."

Tamir is skillfully using liberal principle to expose the nationalist confusion, by no means exclusive to Jewish nationalism, between historical narrative and moral entitlement. As she puts it, "the justification of national rights is thus separated from the glorious or tormented past of each nation, from its antiquity, or from its success in attaining territorial gains." Jews have the same right to a homeland as any other nationally self-conscious group. They have this right not by virtue of their particular history, but by sharing certain universal characteristics with other human beings.

All people, Tamir maintains, need a national community in which to develop their full potential as linguistically and historically grounded individuals:

> Outside such communities they cannot develop a language and a culture, or set themselves aims. Their lives become meaningless; there is no substance to their reflection, no set of norms and values in the light of which they can make choices and become the free, autonomous persons that liberals assume them to be.

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living meaningful lives. Still, even if it is overstressed, the point is good. A liberal can defend his people's entitlement to a national homeland by reference not to their particular history, but to an anthropology of natural facts about human beings. If nationalism is a form of particularism, you might say, then the grounds of this particularism are not particular, they are universal.

Tamir's contention that philosophical anthropology offers a secure universal grounding for particularist claims is very interesting, and it confers upon nationalism a new kind of decency. The problem is that she carries her objections to the argument from suffering too far. For where the nationalist argument from history and the liberal argument from human nature coincide, surely, is in the proposition that the most basic human need of all is security. It is primary because everything else that is valued by a people can be set at naught if they are unable to defend themselves from violence.

When people struggle to achieve statehood, they do so on the rational supposition that no one can be counted on to protect them as well as they can protect themselves. This is not as evident to Tamir as it should be. Perhaps she is trying to resist one of her own society's great clichés; and yet the Israeli insistence on suffering as the foundation of self-reliance is persuasive. Sometimes Tamir appears to treat the Zionist conception of Jewish statehood as only a claim to reparation.

If that were the claim, it would indeed be false. To adduce suffering, however, is not only to adduce the past, or to reduce your argument to a historical narrative. The cautionary rationale for statehood, the one that bases it upon the need for security, is neither reparative nor retroactive. It is prospective. A state is warranted when a people have good reason to believe that statehood is their only security *for the future.* And Jews are hardly unique in basing their case on such a claim. All stateless peoples—the Kurds, for example—ground their case for self-determination on the argument from suffering, and in my view they do so rightly.

In a laudable attempt to use high liberal principle to disinfest nationalism of its hysteria and its kitsch, Tamir has mysteriously failed to engage with nationalism's most powerful argument. People seek nation-states of their own because they believe that these entities alone will protect them from the violence and the intimidation of their neighbors. In a book otherwise admirably focused on real problems, Tamir seems to ignore the environing context of fear and violence that so decisively accounts for the desperation of nationalist struggles. Thus she argues, for example, that movements struggling for national self-determination need not and should not seek statehood; that peoples can attain self-affirmation and the necessary sense of belonging just as securely in arrangements of autonomy or regional self-government. To demand statehood in every case is to balkanize the already overfragmented state system of the modern world.

This is obviously true. Still, if Tamir is worried about balkanization, she needs to define more clearly the conditions in which a nationalist struggle warrants statehood and the conditions in which it should settle for autonomy, federation or some sub-sovereign form of self-determination. She fails to define these conditions because she misunderstands why some nationalist movements press on toward statehood and some do not. If most Catalans, Basques, Scots and Walloons are content with autonomy or self-government within existing states, it is simply because they have not been grossly victimized or exterminated by those with whom they share the nation-state. But autonomy within or alongside existing states is hardly likely to satisfy a people like the Palestinians who, whatever the rights and wrongs of the dispute, have a long experience of violence at the hands of their neighbors.

Violence is the difference. It is not enough for a people to feel oppressed, or to feel that they have suffered at the hands of another group. Most minorities in the world have some reason to object to their treatment at the hands of a dominant group. But the demand for actual statehood can only be based on an experience of violence, sufficiently protracted and widespread to convince any observer that such people can only be secure if they have an effective means of self-defense, that is, a state of their own. The Jewish people meet this criterion. So do their enemies, the Palestinians. The sufferings of both peoples are not equivalent, but both peoples have eminently good reasons to make use of the argument from suffering when grounding their case for statehood.

When dealing with the Palestinian question, Tamir argues, on grounds of liberal consistency, that a Jewish nationalist cannot deny the validity of Palestinian nationalism. The elements of Zionist myth that "privilege" one national struggle, or that define a people in terms of election or special destiny at the expense of another people, are inconsistent and illegitimate. The defensible core of Zionist nationalism, Tamir argues, is the Jewish right of return—the proposition that all Jews, whatever their citizenship, have the right to claim Israel as their nationality and reside there in the Jewish homeland.

Thus she examines whether such an ethnic right of return is compatible with full equality of citizenship rights among national minorities in a state. It appears to prefer the rights of one ethnic group to the rights of another. For this reason, the Jewish right of return can only be squared with the national rights of Palestinians if they, too, are accorded an equal and equivalent right of return to some "Palestinian entity" that they could call their own. While this may be as much symmetry of national rights as Israel can safely allow, it certainly will not seem symmetrical to Palestinians; Palestinians born in Haifa do not seek the right to return to Jericho. And so Palestinians reading this book will complain that in their case liberal principle has given way before national exigency.

While Tamir is prepared to envisage not merely a Palestinian "entity" but an actual Palestinian state, she is clearly unhappy about the tendency of nationalist movements to confuse self-determination with self-rule. She wishes that they would be content with autonomy within regional security guarantees. Yet had Tamir paid more attention to the argument from suffering, and had she admitted its prospective force, she would have to admit that Palestinians have good reason to pursue nothing less than statehood.

Tamir's well-meaning endorsement of supernational, regional security arrangements as an alternative to a proliferation of small states in the Middle East wildly overstates the ability of regional organizations to contain violence between peoples. (Consider the European Community's failure in Yugoslavia.) It also tacitly endorses an unequal and illiberal result, namely that some peoples, such as the Israelis, get to keep the states they already have, while stateless peoples, such as the Palestinians, are advised, for liberal reasons, to rest content with autonomy and structures of regional cooperation. This they are most unlikely to do, and for excellent reasons.

I do not mean to tax a book that makes an illuminating contribution to a difficult philosophical debate for failing to resolve the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. And yet Tamir invites us, on her very first page, to interpret her book as an illustration of one nationalist's struggle with her

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own situation and with her own reasoning about it. This is a book of philosophy that illuminates the real world. Indeed, one of the achievements of this intelligent and humane work is that it will remind its Anglo-American readers how insular our liberal discourse is, how distant from the agonies of liberals who must think and act in unsafe havens or in no havens at all, where principles collide rudely with the nation-states and the national movements of our violent new world.

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF's book on nationalism, *Blood and Belonging*, will be published this spring by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Thrills and Chills

BY BRAD LEITHAUSER

Smilla's Sense of Snow by Peter Hoeg translated by Tiina Nunnally

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 453 pp., $21)

So many other puzzles beset the reader of *Smilla's Sense of Snow* that, adrift in its mazes, you almost forget to ask, What type of novel is this? Is it a mystery? A techno-thriller? Some mutant species of science fiction? The publishers bill it as a simple thriller, albeit with an exotic setting; they compare it to *Gorky Park*. If a thriller is what it is, it's the best one I've read in years. And yet, in the attention that it lavishes on peripheral characters who advance the plot only incrementally, in the focus that it places on philosophical questions and in the ultimate indifference that it shows the loose ends of its narrative, the book pays little heed to the conventions of the thriller. Whatever else it may be, *Smilla's Sense of Snow* is the record of a search—one of the oddest and most beguiling journeys I've come across in contemporary fiction.

Like the story she tells, the heroine is a heterogeneous blend. Her name is Smilla Qaavigaaq Jaspersen. Her father is a Danish anesthesiologist of international reputation. Years before, while doing medical research in Greenland, he met and married Smilla's mother, a bearskin-clad Eskimo who hunted seals and auks and narwhals. When his wife eventually drowned, he brought his daughter to Copenhagen, where she, now a woman in her late 30s, continues to live. When we first lay eyes on Smilla, she's a creature of some finery. It is December. Dark, wintry Copenhagen is beginning to wrap itself up in ice, and Smilla is portrayed as an "elegant lady" in a cashmere sweater and a fur hat. She is someone else when, near the close of the book, we glimpse her with her clothes off as she steps into a shower:

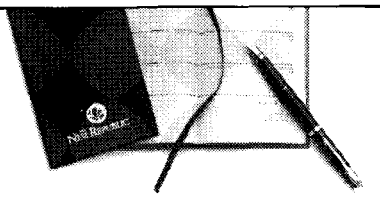
> There's no skin on my kneecaps. Between my hips there is a wide yellowish-blue patch that has coagulated under the skin where Jakkelsen's marline spike struck me. The palms of both hands have suppurating lesions that refuse to close. At the base of my skull I have a bruise like a gull's egg ...

This is a partial list of wounds. Still to come is the breaking of her nose. The mysterious struggle she is engaged in, against an amorphous circle of thugs and aristocrats, is savage. She might as well be battling one of the bears that she used to come upon in the far north:

> Not one of those living carcasses that amuse you at the zoo, but a *polar bear*, the one from the Greenlandic coat of arms, colossal, three-quarters of a ton of muscle, bone and teeth. With an extreme, lethal ability to explode. A wild animal that has existed for only 20,000 years, and in that time has known only two types of mammals: its own species and its prey.

Actually, she might be better off with the polar bear. At least she would know who her enemy was and why it wanted her dead.

What she does know is that something is amiss when a little boy who lives in her apartment building tumbles off a snowy roof to his death. The Danish police judge it an accident. They conclude that the boy slipped while at play. But Smilla has a "sense of snow," and when she ventures up to the rooftop and minutely examines the boy's tracks, they suggest to her that he was in fear and in flight. What could the boy have been so scared of? It's a question that will lead her first into the business archives of a Danish



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Index of First Lines

— from *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry* and *Poets from the North of Ireland*

A wounded otter,
A zippo lighter,
Balmy as summer. It won't last.

Captain Fox sits reading metaphysics.
Consider the sea.
Consider a coral or guano atoll.

Didn't he ramble?—
Driving the perfect length of Ireland.
Even now I wish that you had been there.

Fancy meeting *you* out here on the desert!
Faoi mar a bheadh leon cuthaigh no tarbh fasaigh!

Gene sat on a rock, dangling our map.
God, you could grow to love it.

His father gave him a box of truisms.
Horse Boyle was called Horse Boyle because of his brother Mule.

I am Alice of Daphne, and my heart clogs for John Pounden.

I was making my way home late one night;
In the first taxi he was alone tra-la.
I stop to consult my diary and think how queer.

Join me in celebrating
Just there, in the corner of the whin-field
Like dolmens round my childhood, the old people.

My window shook all night in Camden town;
My world has been laid low, and the wind blows,
Now that the men have gone off to the choleric wars.

O country people,
O country people, you of the hill farms,
Our youth was gay but rough:
Passing through,
Pulling up flax.

Quick, woman, in your net,
Remember summer when God turned on the heat.

Someone else cut off my head.
Something is pushing against my blood.
So you are married, girl. It makes me sad.

The barman vaulted the counter.
The black fox loped out of the hills.

The rain comes flapping through the yard,
The spaceship drifting up,
The thing not done,
The tide gone out for good.

Was it a vision or a waking dream?
Was it wind off the dumps?
We approached the shore. Once more
We broke out of our dream into a clearing.
We left the western island to live among strangers.
What haunts me is a farmhouse among trees.

ANNIE DILLARD

mining company, and eventually onto a ship journeying to an island off the west coast of Greenland, where the dead boy's father himself died in a puzzling accident.

What we have here is perhaps the staple cliché of the thriller genre: the piecemeal discovery that an isolated act of violence fits into an ever-widening conspiracy. And as such—as a cliché against which any experienced reader becomes cynically steeled—its handling presents a monumental task to a writer bent on presenting it with artistic freshness. This is a task that Peter Hoeg handles with great deftness. Everything in his story seems to build simultaneously. The conspiracy widens, the violence escalates, the scenery shifts from the dark level streets of Copenhagen to the shimmering ice caverns of a Greenlandic glacier. Steadily the novel grows scarier, bloodier, colder.

At the outset of her tale I was aware that Smilla—as a European, an Eskimo and a woman—stood at three removes from a reader such as myself. All the more striking, then, was the speed with which the sense of distance from her vanished—the speed of arriving on intimate terms with her. And she accomplishes this without being at all forthcoming. She is a taciturn soul. We read nearly 100 pages before we discover that her passion for snow and ice derives not merely from experience but from scholarship. She is a glaciologist, with articles to her credit like "Statistics on Glacial Graphology" and "Mathematical Models for Brine Drainage from Seawater Ice." We believe in this heroine partly because her reticence in no way feels coy. It seems, rather, like the wariness of somebody who, having grown up surrounded by dangers, instinctively seeks to keep predators at bay.

There is wariness, too, in Smilla's didactic, vaguely professorial mode of narration. Her method is expository and deductive. Time and again she opens a new section or paragraph with a general pronouncement whose pertinence is unclear: "Chivalry is an archetype," "The misconception that violence always favors the physically strong has spread to a large segment of the population," "Falling in love has been greatly overrated," "People perish during transitional phases." She then steers the remark, in wheeling, roundabout fashion, to the situation at hand. The plot advances in fits and starts, having been filtered through a driving, complicated mind. I have no idea, obviously, whether a half-Inuit / half-Danish female glaciologist might plausibly think as Smilla thinks; but in the fictional

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atmosphere she creates and inhabits, her sensibility has a realistically wide-ranging coherence.

We trust her in part because we sense behind her an author who has combined extensive first-hand knowledge with enormous amounts of research. Hoeg knows a good deal about shipping practices, anesthesiology, cooking, maritime regulations, glaciers, forensic pathology, mathematics, Danish corporate law and so on. His heroine conveys authority, so that one doesn't question her (one is simply glad to have learned a fact) when she, in her appealingly pedantic way, informs the reader that Greenlanders have "the largest skulls in the world," or that "the most dangerous kind of avalanches are powder snow avalanches," or that the complex number system is the "first number system in which it's possible to explain satisfactorily the crystal formation of ice," or that "Rigor mortis spreads from the jaw muscles downward." So convincing is this aura of erudition that it remains unshaken by an occasional slip—as where Hoeg offers erroneous statistics about the murder rate in Dallas.

Indeed, one continues to believe in Hoeg, and in Smilla, even as the story drifts further and further into the fantastic. Something peculiar happens to *Smilla's Sense of Snow* as it sails toward its denouement. Small incongruous hints that seem to belong to another genre—to science fiction rather than to the thriller—start to proliferate. We begin to hear about radiation, about asteroids, about parasitic worms that behave like nothing under the sun. Meanwhile, the novel pushes northward, eventually transporting us into an almost Coleridgean fantasy-world ("a miracle of rare device, / A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice"), where a meteorite has constructed a kind of crystal palace around itself, whose ice may be giving birth to a horror. A novel that had seemed centered on murder and on corporate corruption now takes on the trappings of movies like *The Blob* (whose extraterrestrial predator, one recalls, was shipped to the arctic), *The Thing* (whose monster preyed on the inhabitants of an arctic station) and *Them* (which evoked a world threatened by genetic mutation).

Smilla's Sense of Snow underwent a small but unfortunate alteration on its journey into hardcover. I'm told that the book's Danish title might be literally translated as "Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow." The novel happened first to reach me not in bound galleys but in typescript, where it was called simply "A Sense of Snow"—a more bracing, austerely inviting title than the compromise eventually arrived at. The book looked destined to join that singular fraternity of foreign novels whose title in English translation seems an improvement on the original—books like Junichiro Tanizaki's *The Makioka Sisters* (Japanese title: "Dry Snow") or Halldor Laxness's *The Fish Can Sing* (Icelandic title: "The Annals of Brekkukot").

In every other way, the novel has been beautifully translated by Tiina Nunnally, who is one of the founding forces behind the Fjord Press, a small publisher in Seattle that has perhaps done more than any other press to bring modern Scandinavian literature to America (including Knut Hamsun's stories, the first two volumes of Martin Andersen Nexø's *Pelle the Conqueror* and Jens Peter Jacobsen's *Niels Lyhne*). With *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, Nunnally has outdone herself. The book must have been ferociously difficult to translate, not only for its length and wealth of technical detail but for its diverse subtlety. The translation ranges impeccably from the bleakly lyrical ("Outside, above the harbor, a light appears, as if it had been sleeping in the canals, under the bridges, and is now hesitantly rising up onto the ice, which grows brighter") to the tersely witty ("His handwriting looks as if he has taken a course in bragging about himself calligraphically"). And there are passages of surpassing beauty:

> One October day the temperature drops fifty degrees in four hours, and the sea is as motionless as a mirror. It's waiting to reflect a wonder of creation. The clouds and the sea glide together in a curtain of heavy gray silk. The water grows viscous and tinged with pink, like a liqueur of wild berries. A blue fog of frost detaches itself from the surface of the water and drifts across the mirror. Then the water solidifies. Up out of the dark sea the cold now pulls a rose garden, a white blanket of ice blossoms formed from salt and frozen drops of water.

This is, evidently, the first time Hoeg—who is in his late 30s and has published a couple of other novels—has written anything like a thriller. As such, it's a remarkably skillful and ingenious display—with a couple of minor, unexpectedly amateurish touches. In an already complicated story, he surely might have been expected, for instance, to vary his characters' names somewhat; as it is, the reader must keep straight Loyen, Lander, Louber, Lubing, Lagermann and Licht . . .

For the reader who negotiates safely through this swamp of liquid consonants, a larger problem arrives at the novel's close, where we're clearly meant to reach the apex of the book's depictions of evil. But I've met its arch-villain dozens and dozens of times: he's the brilliant, reckless mad-scientist found in half the low-budget sci-fi movies ever made. In a book containing a number of minor characters who are nothing short of dazzling (so that the reader actually feels a sharp, tugging reluctance when they pass out of its pages), one hardly expects the at-last-revealed leader of the Bad Guys to be a forgettable figure—but that's what he is.

Quite unforgettable, conversely, are Hoeg's depictions of icy landscapes. I've long had a taste for literature about the far north—both novels and accounts of various polar settlements and expeditions. But I don't know that I've ever met ice that has the same grinding, unstoppable weight as that which piles up in *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. Here is frazil ice and grease ice and pancake ice and field ice and meltwater ice, as well as varieties identified in Greenlandic (*ivuniq, maniilaq, apuhiniq*) because English lacks specialized terms for them. Here, too, are icebergs 325 feet tall. My encyclopedia tells me that something like a sixth of the globe is covered by ice and snow. In literature, as in life, it's a mostly unpopulated zone. One thinks of Frankenstein's monster, last seen drifting on the ice floes; of the narrator of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, reflecting back on arctic Zembla as he narrates a tale of buried violence in New England; of the frozen girl in the crystal mausoleum of Tarjei Vesaas's *The Ice Palace*. Readers who have the good fortune to pick up Hoeg's novel will no doubt henceforth add Smilla Qaavigaaq Jaspersen to this list. She's last glimpsed at nightfall, venturing over ice nearly "as thin as a membrane, a fetal membrane," stretched over a sea "dark and salty like blood."

BRAD LEITHAUSER is the author most recently of *Seaward* (Knopf).

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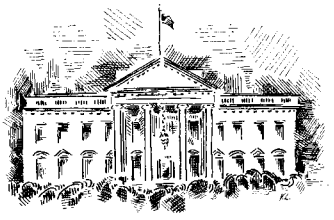
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Obsession

IN AN AFL-CIO COMMERCIAL OPPOSing the North American Free Trade Agreement, a jarring number crops up: as many as 500,000 jobs will be lost. The AFL-CIO says it rounded this number down from a "550,000 job loss" estimate by the Economic Policy Institute. The Economic Policy Institute says it got its number from University of California economist Raul Hinojosa. Hinojosa says, "I'm completely pissed off." Exploring the origin of numbers that surface in Washington policy debates is often like visiting the proverbial sausage factory; your opinion of the product may be permanently changed. The creation of "550,000 job loss" is a twisted tale even by local standards.

IT BEGINS DURING THE BUSH ADministration. Hinojosa (now a visiting scholar at the Inter-American Development Bank) and economist Robert McCleery had built a computer model for assessing free trade with Mexico. Sensing an ideological affinity with the Economic Policy Institute, Hinojosa offered his services. "I came to them and said, 'We should do some modeling from the left perspective.'" He warned EPI that any good NAFTA model would find net U.S. gains; but he felt there was value in identifying NAFTA's victims. EPI seemed cool on the idea. "They were interested in getting net losses." One EPI staffer had a suggestion. First, include in the model a flow of capital from the United States to Mexico, since NAFTA will make investment in Mexico more attractive. Second, assume that the United States and Mexico are the only two countries in the world. Thus (*a*) all capital attracted to Mexico is American (not Japanese, not German); and (*b*) all this capital is diverted from American use, not from use abroad. These assumptions, Hinojosa notes, are "totally ridiculous." They amount to assuming that new factories are created in Mexico by picking up U.S. factories, shaking them until the workers fall out and moving them to Mexico. Hinojosa politely declined to run the model. Then he went abroad on business, assuming the matter was closed.

EPI APPROACHED HIS COLLABORAtor, McCleery, and got him to run the zero-sum scenario through the computer. The result was worked into a paper by EPI President Jeff Faux and staffer William Spriggs. When Hinojosa got back to the United States, EPI was poised to release the paper. Meanwhile, his collaborator was getting edgy; he had professional reasons for not wanting to be involved. "Bob calls me and says, 'I've just really screwed up.... Is it okay if only your name goes on it?'" After consulting with EPI, Hinojosa acquiesced. He never saw a draft of the Faux-Spriggs paper, but he felt reassured that the model would be described with careful qualification. And actually, the paper wasn't *massively* misleading. It said, "the U.S. loses 550,000 jobs" and GDP "falls by $36 billion," and then added (demonstrating a nuance that would eventually desert Faux), "these workers are reemployed," albeit "with a 50 percent wage cut." To be sure, there's lots of distortion here. The 50 percent figure, says Hinojosa, is way, way high. Also, these "lost" jobs don't really disappear; they're jobs that would have been created in the absence of NAFTA but aren't. And the "$36 billion" is misleading; in the model, GDP is lower largely because Mexican migrants who would have helped generate it stay at home now that better jobs exist in Mexico. (This, Hinojosa notes, is the only real sense in which total future U.S. employment is reduced: jobs fail to materialize because the Mexicans who would have filled them never arrive—which actually *raises* the wages of many low-wage American workers.) Still, at least Faux and Spriggs didn't frame the "job loss" the way the AFL-CIO now frames it—suggesting a *net* loss of jobs. Nonetheless, McCleery and Hinojosa felt moved to write a four-page letter to EPI about the various sources of "confusion" in the paper.



THE LETTER DIDN'T THROW FAUX into paroxysms of remorse and self-doubt. Two years later, his paper remains part of EPI's NAFTA press kit. More important, so does the accompanying press release, which describes "a loss of 550,000 high-wage jobs"—no mention of the 550,000 jobs created. And over time, Faux himself has fallen into this way of talking. In a 1992 opinion piece, he cited "a net loss of 550,000 jobs" and attributed the number to Hinojosa and McCleery—whose letter to him a year earlier had said, "it is incorrect to say that 'the U.S. loses 550,000 jobs.'" Faux's article, in the Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call*, was a plea for members of Congress to be skeptical of NAFTA estimates. He wrote, "Most economists are not trying to mislead, but they speak a different language. You can make a big mistake if you don't understand precisely what they are saying. Be careful."

BY NOW, WHETHER BECAUSE OF EPI's immortal press release or Faux's utterances or whatever, "550,000 jobs" has taken on a life of its own. Newspapers across the country report it as if it were a net loss, and attribute it to EPI. It is one of two terrifying numbers that constitute anti-NAFTA boilerplate for union leaders. (EPI is partly funded by unions.) The other number is a $1,000 cut in the incomes of 70 percent of U.S. workers. As readers of my previous attack on EPI ("Faux Pax," TNR, October 11) may recall, that number was also propagated by Faux and has also been disavowed by its purported author, Edward Leamer of UCLA. Since I wrote that article, a couple of people have asked why I seem so obsessed with ferreting out anti-NAFTA misinformation. Well, first there's my belief that free trade raises prosperity at home and abroad; enmeshes the world in a web of mutual self-interest that makes nuclear war and other conflagrations less likely; lays the institutional foundation for supranationally addressing problems ranging from pollution to abusive labor practices; and, by nourishing free markets, sets the stage for political freedom and democracy in developing countries. Beyond all that, the main source of my obsession is the utter, depressing irrationality that NAFTA's defeat would represent. I know what you're thinking: if irrationality bothers you, leave town. But actually, irrationality isn't the usual problem in Washington. Consider the federal budget, the paradigmatic case of gridlock. Just about everyone can find something in a budget-cutting package that hurts them. When they all protest and doom the package they may thus harm their long-term interests, but at least their goal—to be a "free rider" while everyone else foots the bill—was one of rational self-interest. NAFTA is different; it would hurt the interests—short term or long term—of a very small number of Americans (who, as Hinojosa stresses, deserve support); and it would help most Americans, if mildly. That's why the anti-NAFTA campaign has come to rely so heavily on untruth. Now, in reply, pro-NAFTA forces—including the administration—are starting to tell equally tall tales. I've waited years for an important policy that would prevail on the strength of simple truth. Whatever happens with NAFTA, I guess I'll have to keep waiting.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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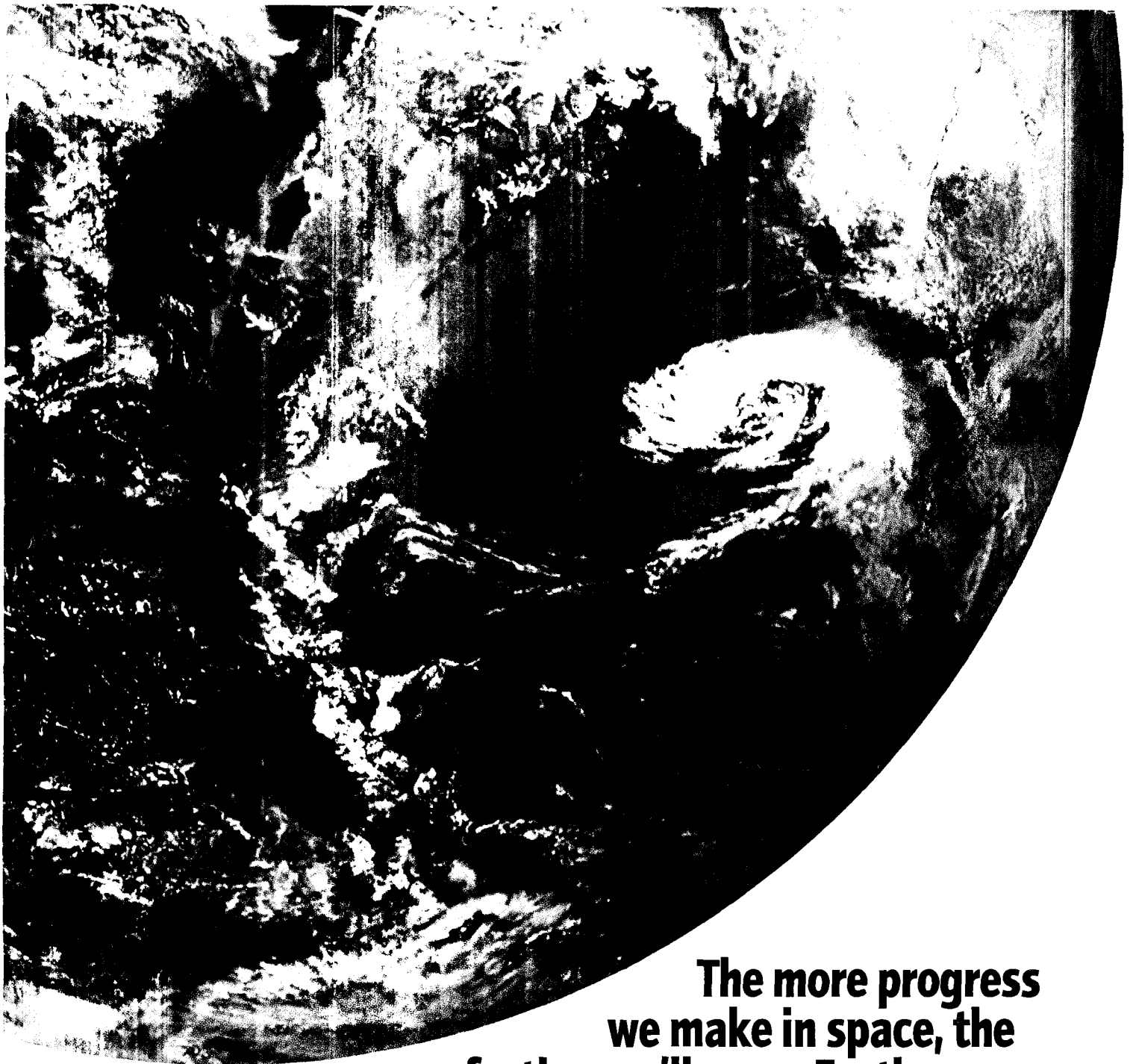

A view of the United States as seen from space.
Photo courtesy of NASA.

The more progress we make in space, the further we'll go on Earth.

America needs space to grow. Advances in science, medicine and technology will be enhanced, even markedly increased, through our efforts in space. Ensuring America's preeminence in space is a national priority. As one of NASA's top performers, Lockheed is helping to lead this important effort.

We're at the forefront of space technology today. Our expertise extends from engineering and science support of Johnson Space Center to leadership in vital programs like Space Station, Space Shuttle Processing and the Hubble Space Telescope.

National priorities such as the space program demand advanced technology, reliable systems and affordable solutions. They demand a premier aerospace company. They demand Lockheed.

Lockheed leads.

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Watch NOVA on PBS, Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

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